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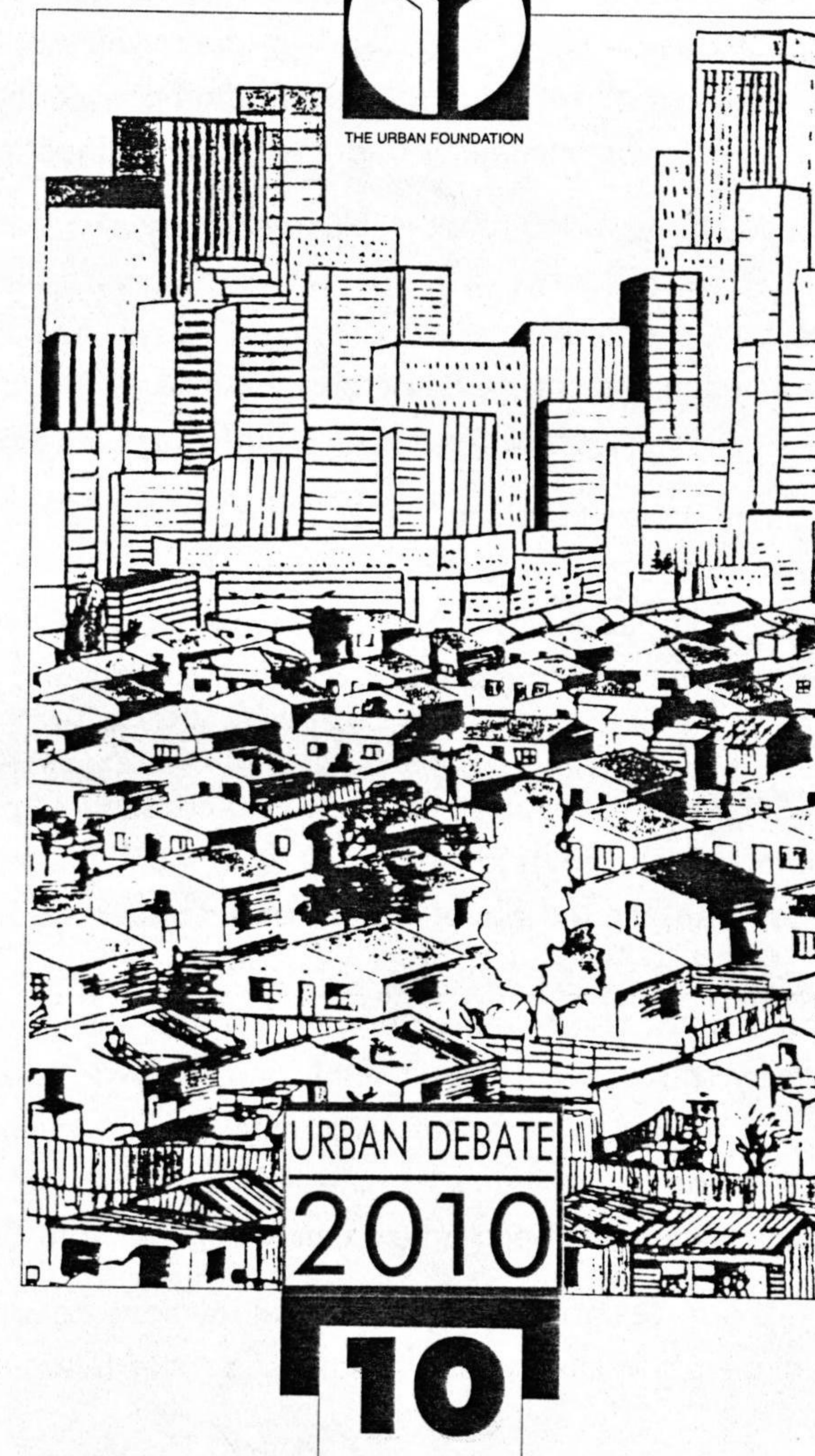
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POLICIES FOR A NEW URBAN FUTURE



INFORMAL HOUSING
Part 1: The Current Situation

“ This publication is one of a series dealing with the issue of urbanisation and how South Africa is going to manage this important dynamic. It is the product of a major five year study managed by the Urban Foundation's Urbanisation Unit under the aegis of the Private Sector Council on Urbanisation – a forum which brings together the major employer bodies, leaders from both urban and business communities and The Urban Foundation.

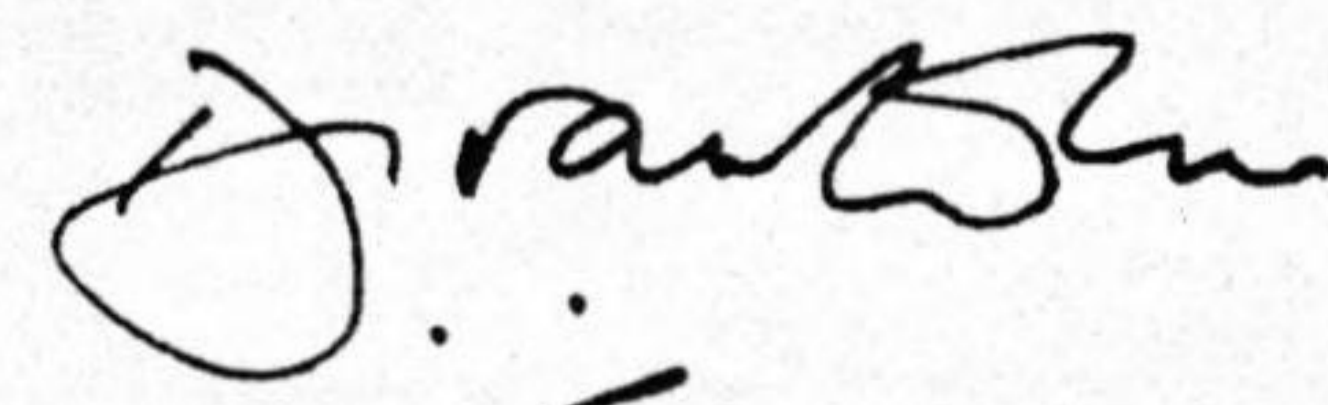
The study has involved considerable research by a wide range of academics under the guidance of a number of working groups, the synthesis of that research, the development of policy proposals on the basis of the research recommendations and the testing of both the research findings and the policy proposals with a very large range of people.

The intention in publishing this and other reports is to provide access for all interested parties to the work of the Private Sector Council. In this way it is hoped that the debate on this critical challenge facing South Africa will be able to move forward on the basis of an understanding of the real issues facing the country.

With the completion of the study and consequent publication of its findings it is appropriate at this point to thank all those involved – the Chairman, the individual and organisational members of the Private Sector Council, the chairmen and members of the working groups, the large number of researchers and consultants, those who participated in the many discussions to test the thinking that was emerging and most of all Ann Bernstein, Jill Strelitz, and the members of

The Urban Foundation's Urbanisation and Housing Policy Units who managed what has been an extremely complex and demanding process.

This has been a project to which many have contributed. Its goal is that ultimately the lives of millions of South Africans should benefit.”



D L van Coller
Chief Executive: Urban Foundation

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SECTION ONE : INTRODUCTION

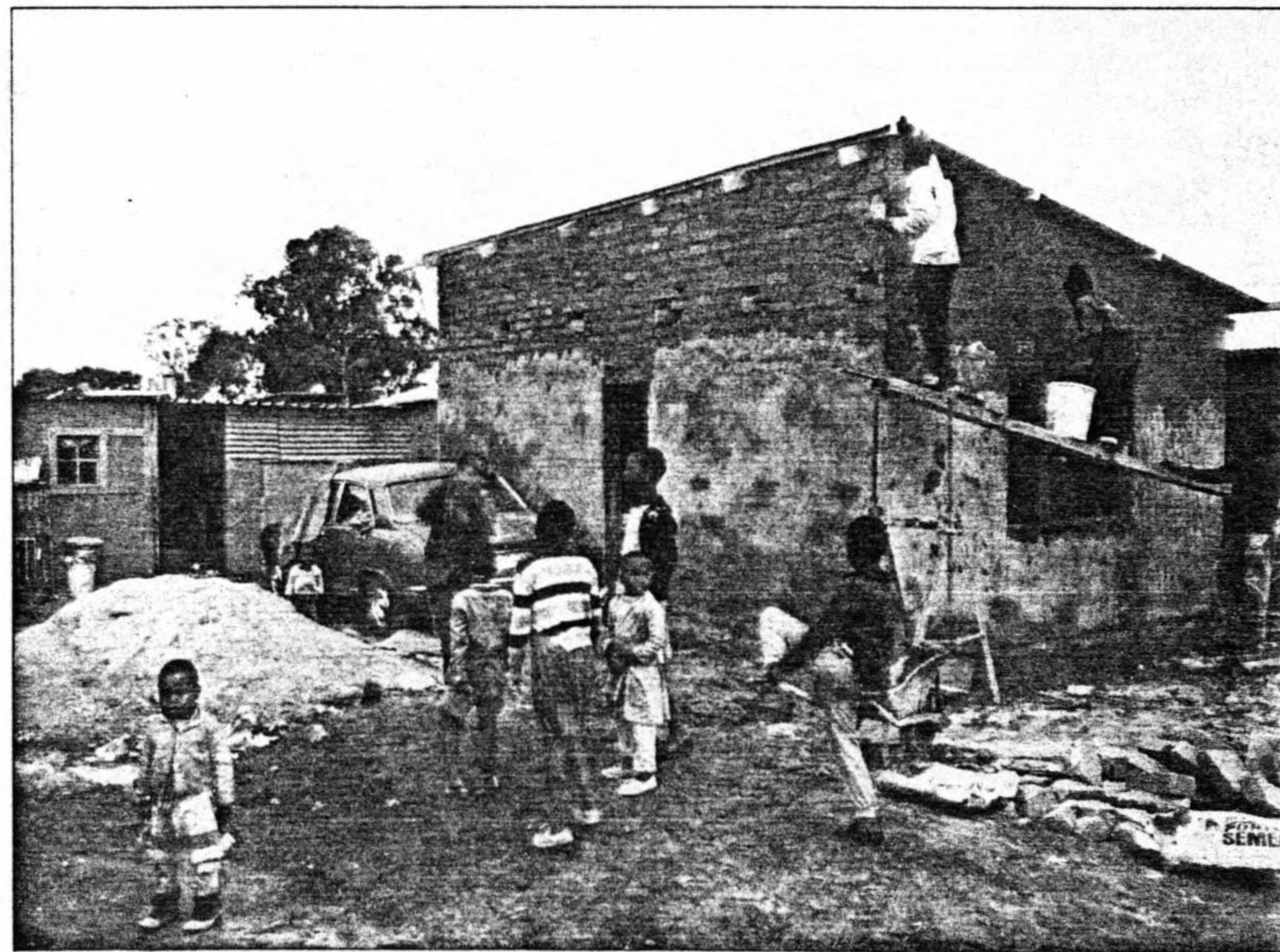
THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMAL HOUSING

Few forms of shelter have evoked as much controversy and emotion as informal housing, or to use other terms, housing which is established unconventionally. Throughout the world it has been attacked by state, private and political interests fearful of seemingly uncontrolled urban expansion and of the political mobilisation of informal settlers. Informal housing has been condemned by some commentators as a vehicle for the reproduction of urban and rural poverty, and celebrated by others as an expression of the creativity and determination of people who do not enjoy access to formal housing.

While there is a great diversity of views on the social and political role of informal

housing, there is no doubt that it is important in the lives of millions of people throughout the developing world. Indeed, in many countries it is the dominant form of housing delivery, and there are numerous Third World cities where most of the population live in some form of informal housing (see Table 6 on page 38). Informed by this reality, and the growing recognition of the futility of demolishing informal housing without viable alternatives, a growing international re-evaluation of informal housing has been occurring.

South African cities face many challenges on the road to fundamental reform. In housing terms, an accumulated backlog is growing rapidly each year as formal housing provision fails to keep pace with population growth and the formation of new households, and continues to be unaffordable for the majority of urban households. The Urban Foundation estimates that 61 000 units will be required each year to clear the nationwide backlog over 20 years, and 113 000 units per year -



Informal Housing in Action

will be needed to cater for new household formation up to 1995¹.

In addition, rates of economic growth and development have to be increased in order to provide jobs, and socio-economic development must take place to improve quality of life (see the document in the Policies for a New Urban Future series, **Policy Overview: The Urban Challenge** for a discussion of these issues). A national initiative is clearly essential to resolve the housing crisis, and such an initiative can contribute significantly to economic growth and socio-economic development (see the document **Housing for All: Proposals for a National Urban Housing Policy**).

In an appropriate **development** framework, informal housing can play a pivotal part in a national housing drive. Such a framework would facilitate informal housing delivery as one of several options in a broader delivery strategy, and would support the progressive improvement and upgrading of informally-produced housing. **At present, informal housing policy is not framed with development in mind. It has the removal of "squatters" as its central premise, and hence is constrained, controversial and reactive.**

CONTEXT OF THE INFORMAL HOUSING DOCUMENT

This Informal Housing document forms one of the sequence of documents in the **Policies for a New Urban Future** series.

The Urban Foundation's proposals for a national housing policy are presented in the document entitled **Housing for All**. In the framework of these proposals, informal housing is seen to be a positive and significant component of overall policy. The present **Informal Housing** document, in **two parts**, complements **Housing for All** by giving detailed consideration to informal housing issues. **Part One** reviews the current situation in South Africa and contemporary trends elsewhere in the world. **Part Two**

outlines considerations for informal housing policy for the 1990s against the background of a critical analysis of past and current approaches to informal housing in South Africa.

The Urban Foundation and the Private Sector Council are aware that important national actors will debate the role of informal housing in national housing policy. In the conviction that such debate is necessary to the development of a credible and widely-supported housing policy, the two parts of the Informal Housing document provide **resources** for the broad discussion of informal housing. In this spirit, they do not put forward highly developed proposals in the nature of **Housing for All** and some other documents in the **Policies for a New Urban Future** series.

Both parts of the Informal Housing document focus on **urban** informal housing. This is not to suggest, however, that the issues raised are necessarily confined to the urban arena. Owner-building is a common feature in rural areas, and many dense settlements in rural areas have arisen through such housing processes. Furthermore, "squatter" removals and other coercive actions which have affected the informal housing process have occurred in both urban and rural areas. A great deal of what is said about informal housing in the urban context is therefore applicable in both rural and dense settlement areas².

The focus on informal housing does not imply the rejection or negation of other housing delivery options. On the contrary, it is held that informal housing, in the correct policy context, should become an important **option** within a national housing strategy. To ignore other forms of delivery would be a mistake.

SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF PART ONE

Informal Housing: Part One is based on a five-year research programme undertaken by the Urban Foundation and the Private

Sector Council. The research included the following:

- A definitive research and monitoring programme in the PWV region (see Appendix A).
- Overview surveys of informal housing circumstances in the major metropolitan regions of the country outside of the PWV - Durban, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Bloemfontein and Pietermaritzburg - and other representative centres, such as Witbank/Middleburg, Kroonstad, selected areas in Bophuthatswana, and Bushbuckridge.
- Focused studies of local issues such as land invasions, relocation and conflict.
- Reviews of the international informal housing experience, with specific attention given to squatter politics, the role of development agencies, positive informal settlement strategies, "shacklordism" and land invasions.
- Ongoing national scanning of issues and events relating to informal housing.

This first part of the Informal Housing document has five sections. The introduction is the first, and others are as follows:

- In **Section Two**, the current situation of informal housing in South Africa is presented. The section includes:

clarification of the terms and concepts associated with informal settlement; a national overview highlighting the informal housing experiences of the six major metropolitan areas; brief comment on site-and-service schemes; and a detailed case study of informal housing in the PWV region.

- The politics of informal housing are explored in **Section Three**. Attention is focused on popular actions which have emerged in informal settlements, the overlay of local politics, the dimensions of conflict that have emerged, and the experience of land invasions.
- The international experience of informal housing, investigated in **Section Four**, covers three continents; South America, Asia and Africa. The broad shift in the emphasis of national housing policies toward the acceptance of informal housing strategies such as site-and-services and "in-situ" upgrading is documented, and the factors underlying the progressive improvement of informal housing environments (called consolidation) are analysed. Several lessons from the international experience are discussed.
- Finally, in **Section Five**, the importance of the international perspective to South Africa is considered, and the role of the resource documents, **Informal Housing Part One and Two**, in a consultative and open policy process is discussed.

Section Endnotes

1. See *Housing for All* pp. 4-7. The Urban Foundation's estimates of the housing backlog are lower than some, because they take into account all housing units over which secure title is held, including informal housing in site-and-service schemes.
2. The Urban Foundation distinguishes between metropolitan areas, cities and towns, dense (or closer) settlements, and rural areas. In terms of economic criteria and density, the first three categories all qualify as urban areas. Dense settlements occur in rural homeland areas only, but they are agglomerations of mainly informal dwellings where people do not derive significant income from agriculture. Rather, most commute to work in urban or metropolitan centres, often a considerable distance away. See *Population Trends* document in this series.

SECTION TWO : INFORMAL HOUSING IN SOUTH AFRICA - THE CURRENT SITUATION

INTRODUCTION

Informal housing is to be found in and around many towns and cities in South Africa. The Urban Foundation estimates that over **7 million people** live in urban informal housing¹, making this form of shelter a major component of contemporary urban residential landscapes. To give some perspective, the number of urban people in informal housing currently exceeds the total population of the major centres in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging region in 1990². Against this background, it is striking that relatively little is known about the nature and extent of informal housing in South Africa.

The purpose of this section is to provide a clear and factual overview of the current informal housing situation in South Africa. The overview is based on the most extensive and detailed informal housing research programme undertaken in the country (Appendix A), and it will provide a foundation for the policy considerations discussed in the second part of this two volume document on informal housing.

The section begins with a clarification of terms and concepts in the informal housing arena. This is followed by:

- a national overview of the nature and growth of spontaneous informal housing in selected cities;
- a brief review of contemporary site-and-service schemes;
- a case study of informal settlers in the PWV, detailing socio-economic characteristics;

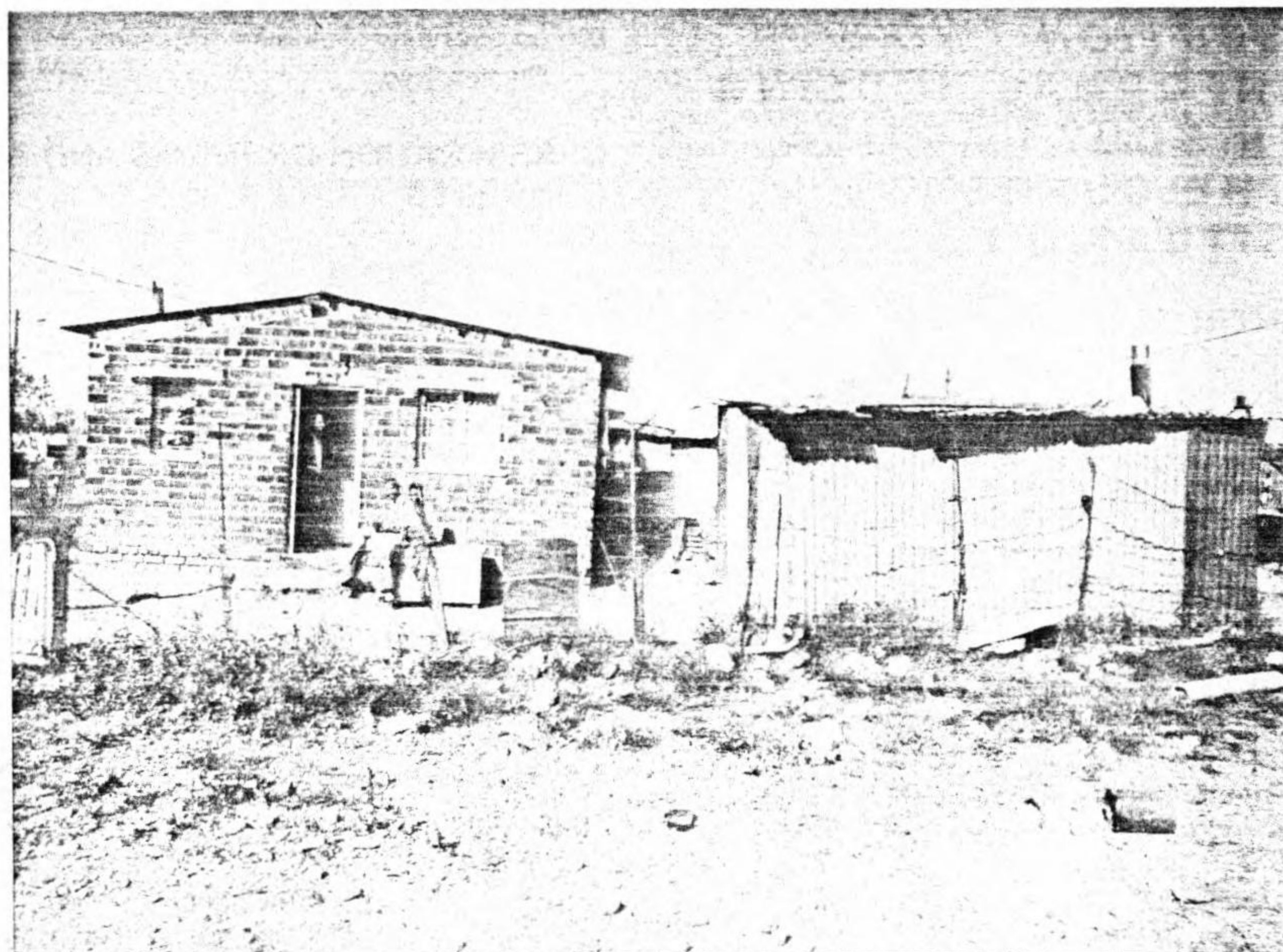
- an overview of themes discussed in Section Two.

CLARIFICATION OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

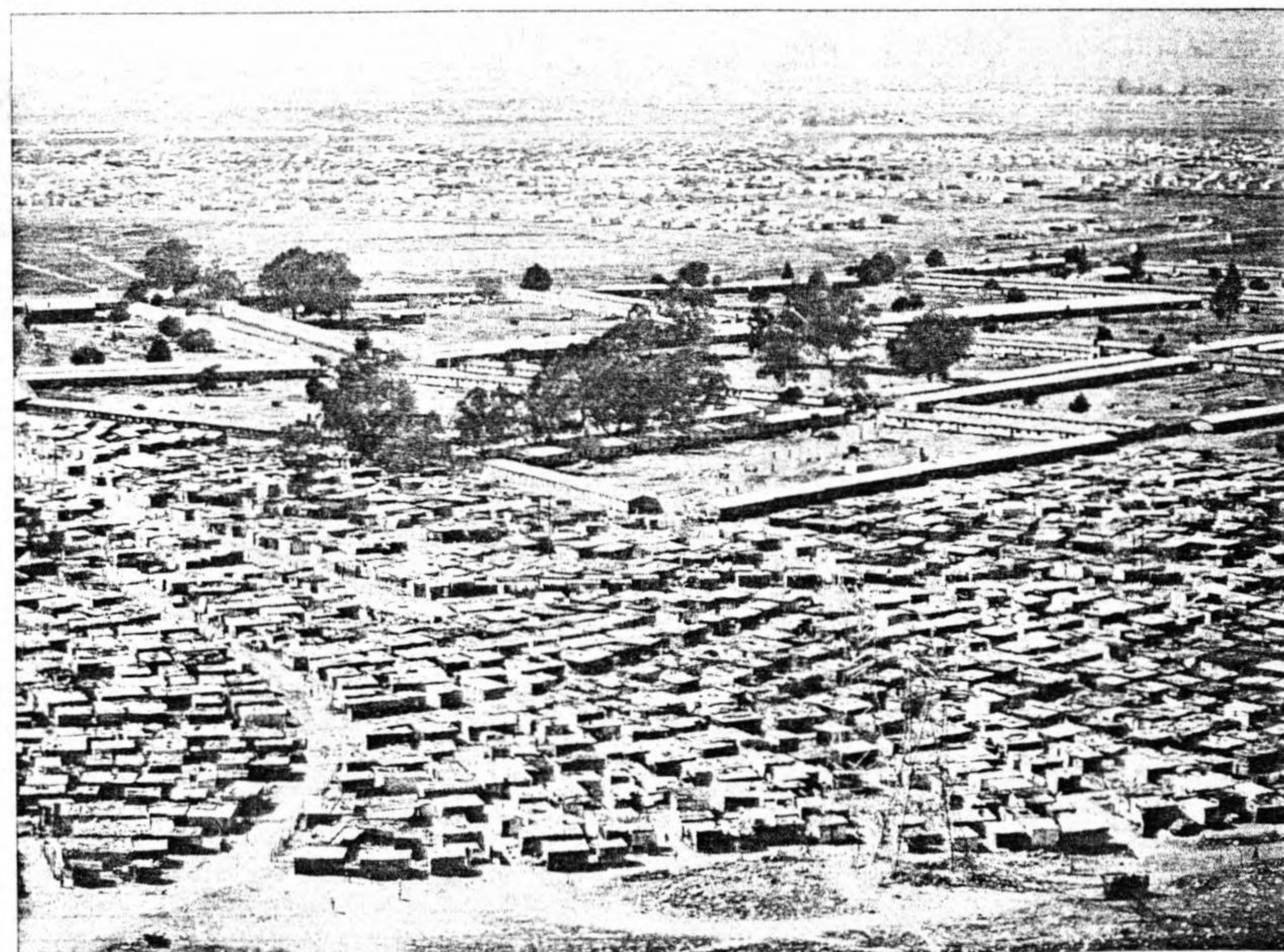
In this document, the term "informal housing" (see Glossary on page 24) has a specific meaning. It refers to housing which is established unconventionally. The document deals exclusively with informal housing in the urban areas of the country. It is recognised that informal housing is common in the rural areas of South Africa and that many of the policy issues are different in such areas. As yet, no significant research has been conducted into rural informal housing and little information exists on this form of shelter in rural areas. **Two broad types of informal housing in urban areas are recognised.**

The first is "spontaneous" informal housing, which is produced outside the framework of formal township planning and development (for example Phola Park and Winterveld). Spontaneous informal housing enclaves often lack services, but there are exceptions. These are cases where basic services have been installed as part of an upgrading programme, or where informal housing is located within formal serviced townships. The materials used in the construction of spontaneous informal housing vary considerably in origin, nature and durability, and include wattle and daub, mud bricks, corrugated iron, plywood sheeting and sometimes more orthodox materials such as concrete blocks and clay bricks. The builders are typically the occupiers themselves, or contractors and "odd-jobbers" operating individually or from the base of small informal businesses. Spontaneous informal housing in urban areas falls into three categories:

- **Backyard shacks** (see Glossary on page 24) are informal structures erected on residential properties in formal legal townships. They are not part of the formal township



Backyard Shacks on a Formal Township Stand



The Phola Park Spontaneous Settlement Bordering Hostels in Tokoza

establishment process and have been treated in a variety of ways by local authorities, ranging from benign neglect to overt hostility (see **Informal Housing: Part Two**).

- **Free-standing informal settlements** (see Glossary on page 24) are clusters of informal structures located on tracts of land within formal townships, in buffer zones between townships, on undeveloped farm land, on tribal land close to urban centres, and on vacant land in formerly white, coloured or asian areas.

- **Scattered informal settlements** are small clusters of informal structures often found in locales such as disused mines and on small-holdings. These settlements are typically impermanent and the residents highly mobile.

The second type of informal housing is that constructed in the context of official "**site-and-service**" schemes (such as Orange Farm and Ivory Park). Site-and-service schemes (see Glossary on page 24) are legally established townships offering legal tenure and some services. Levels of servicing vary from the very basic (pit latrines and communal water points) to the relatively sophisticated (water-borne sewerage, piped water to individual houses). Site-and-service schemes potentially promote an incremental housing process which progresses from unconventional informal shelters to more formal housing. Hence, it is in the early stages of this incremental process that site-and-service schemes can be classified among other forms of informal housing. The objective is to transform them, over time, into formal housing enclaves.

From the above, it will be clear that **informal housing and "squatting" are not synonymous**. "Squatting" refers to the illegal occupation of land and/or buildings (see Glossary on page 24). Participants in authorised site-and-service schemes are

therefore not "squatters". Legal definitions of "squatting" differ from country to country. In South Africa, the definition of "squatters" and the enforcement of "squatter" legislation has been influenced by political considerations that go beyond the simple protection of property rights (see **Informal Housing: Part Two**). Hence whilst the term "squatting" might overlap with "spontaneous informal settlement", this document uses the latter term in order to avoid the stereotypes associated with the former. In some cases, the term "squatting" is used to refer to illegal residence in particular situations.

The last category of informal housing recognised in this document might be argued to be outside the definition of informal housing. It comprises **outbuildings**, which include formally built structures such as garages, sheds or backyard rooms (see Glossary on page 24). They are included because they offer unconventional and often unauthorised shelter to households not accommodated in formal structures designed and erected according to established residential norms and standards.

NATIONAL OVERVIEW: A TALE OF SIX CITIES

Spontaneous informal housing is a national phenomenon. Over 7 million people live in informal houses in South African urban and metropolitan areas. This includes slightly over half of the black³ metropolitan population of the country (Table 1 on page 7). Overall, there are more people living in informal housing circumstances nationally than the total white, asian and coloured population in all metropolitan areas, and two million more than the white population of the country (see **UF Demographic Projection Model**). However, different towns and cities have acquired distinct personalities which are rooted in regional settlement history, and which are manifested in terms of different informal settlement growth rates, housing type mixes and social organisation within

TABLE 1 : THE EXTENT AND DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMAL HOUSING: AN URBAN PERSPECTIVE, 1990⁴

Area	Total Black Population	Informally Housed Population
PWV	5 213 000	2 260 000
Durban	2 600 000 ⁵	1 800 000
Port Elizabeth	580 000	320 000
Cape Town	570 000	330 000
Bloemfontein/Botsh.	470 100	160 000
East London	342 800	105 000

Sources: UF/CPS Report 2 and UF Demographic Projection Model.

and around informal enclaves. In most cities, spontaneous informal housing has multiplied rapidly, especially in free-standing settlements. This growth is often highly visible, attracting a great deal of attention and sometimes precipitating conflict. By contrast, increasing numbers of backyard shacks and outbuildings have attracted relatively little comment, systematic research and official response, despite the fact that they comprise a significant proportion of the informal housing in places such as the PWV, Bloemfontein and East London.

The incidence and general importance of backyard shacks and outbuildings in any locale seems to depend on a variety of factors:

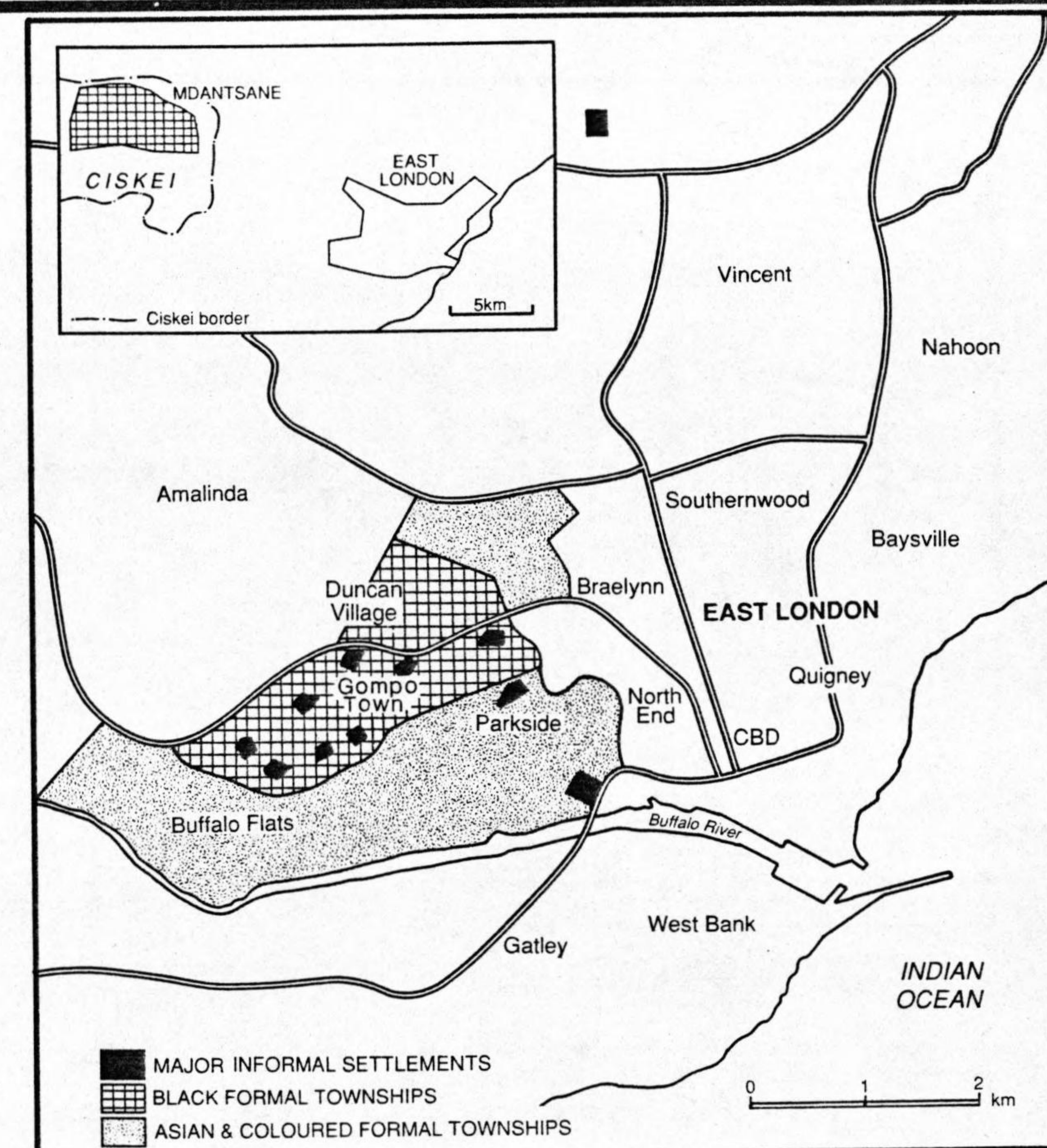
- whether or not local authorities tolerate backyard shacks;
- the "going" rental in backyard shacks by comparison with other accommodation options (e.g. free-standing shack settlements);
- relatively cheap and accessible land seems to persuade people to opt for free-standing settlements rather than backyard shacks and outbuildings. (In Durban, contrary to popular belief, almost half of the huge population now resident in the free-standing settlements previously lived in the formal townships (Tonga-Hulett, 1989));

- available services and facilities, the incomes of people, local family dynamics and a variety of other factors influence the informal housing mix.

In the next sub-section the informal housing "biographies" of East London; Port Elizabeth; Bloemfontein; Cape Town; Durban and the PWV will be described.⁶

East London: "The Worst Informal Conditions"

The economic and in many cases the physical living conditions of the Eastern Cape and especially the border region between the Transkei and Ciskei, are said to be the worst in the country (UF/CPS Report 1.A). It is estimated (UF/CPS Report 1.A) that up to 100 000 people in the East London region were informally housed in 1989 - some in the adjacent Ciskei town of Mdantsane, and others in extremely crowded conditions in areas such as Duncan Village (part of Gomo Town, see Map 1 on page 8). The total population of East London in 1990 was 450 500, with a black population of 342 800. In Gomo Town, population and building density is extremely high. Overcrowding in backyards has occurred to the extent that shacks encroach onto the roads, leaving many impassable. No clear policy position on informal housing exists in this area, and local authority responses have been *ad hoc*. While some new developments are



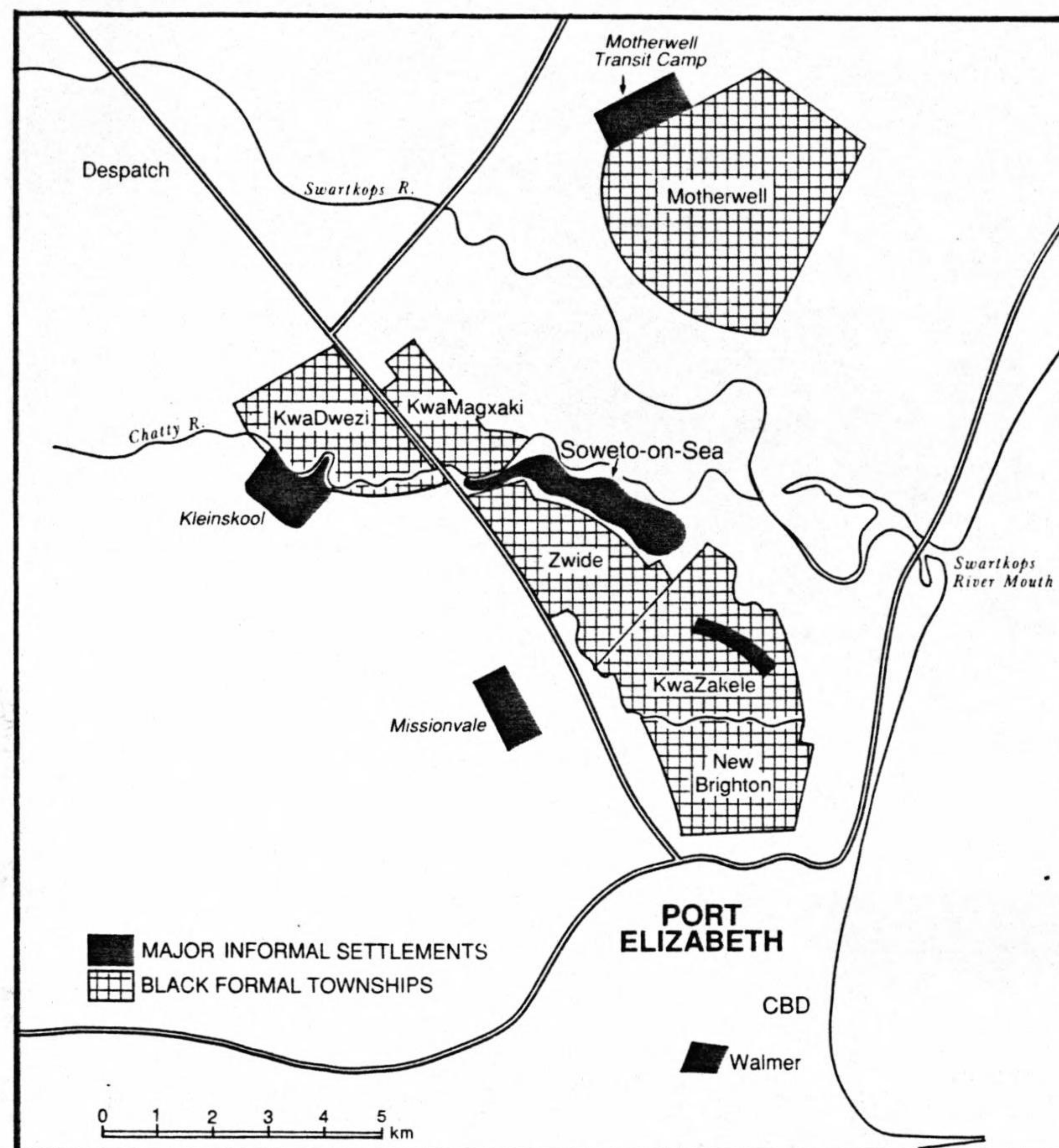
Map 1: Informal Settlement in East London

underway, 1990 saw evictions in some informal settlements. Vigilante assault and intimidation campaigns have led, at various times, to the flight of whole communities and to a resultant change in settlement patterns around the city.

Port Elizabeth: "Battling a Teetering Economy"

The absence of an adjacent homeland means that in Port Elizabeth, the majority of the black population - and the large informal settlement population conservatively

estimated at over 300 000 (UF/CPS Report 1.B) - is concentrated in black townships surrounding the city. In 1990, the total population of Port Elizabeth was 984 100 with a black population of 580 000. Major free-standing settlements, such as Soweto-on-Sea with a population of 84 000, exist in areas under the jurisdiction of certain black local authorities. Smaller free-standing settlements are also to be found in Walmer, Missionvale and Motherwell (Map 2 on page 9). Recently, spontaneous informal settlement has burgeoned (particularly in the Zwide area) as land invasions have



Map 2: Informal Settlement in Port Elizabeth

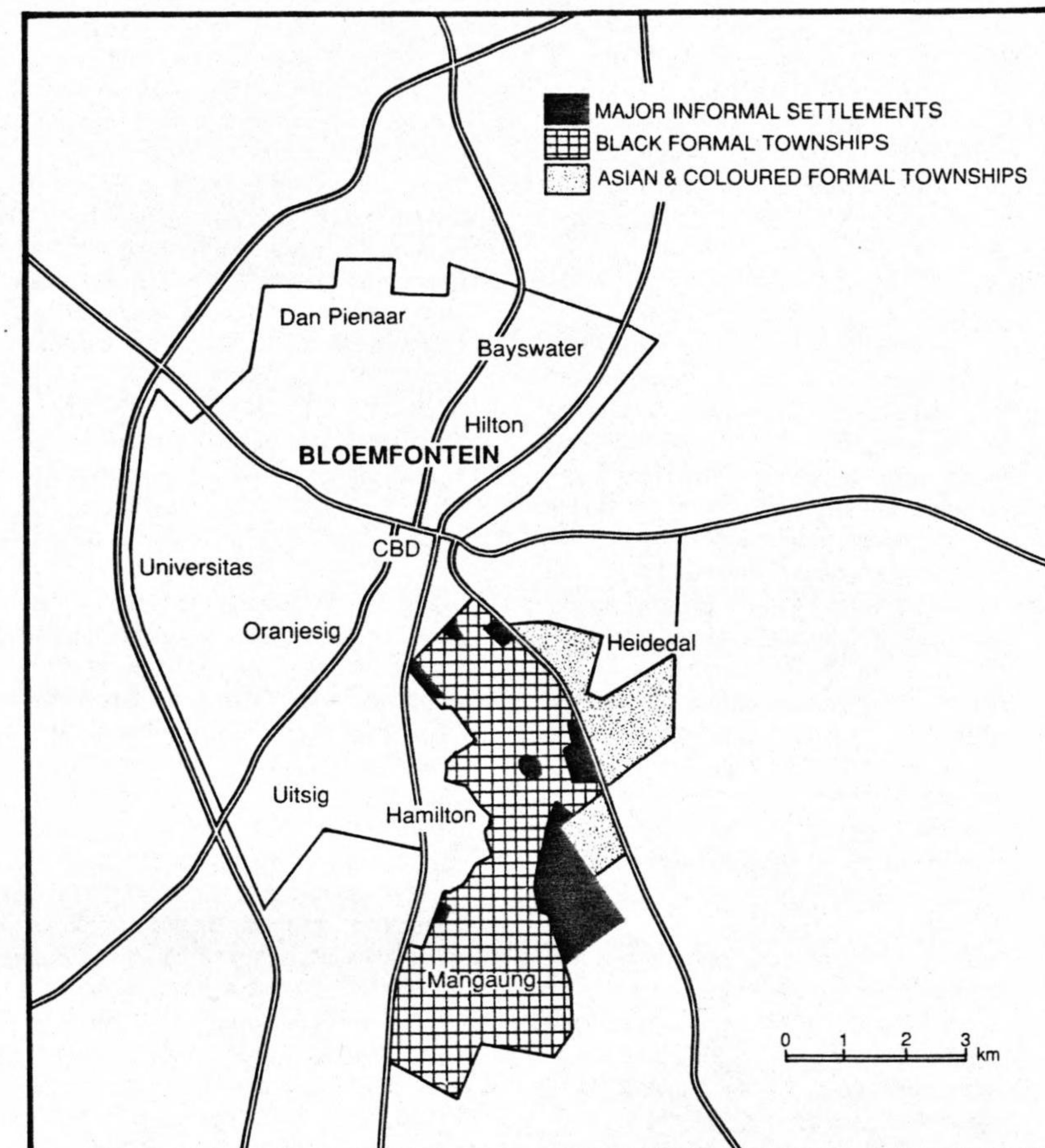
been led from the overcrowded backyards of the formal townships. While no hard information is available on growth trends in free-standing settlements and backyards, it is worth noting that in 1990, a spate of shack building on vacant land within the townships occurred (UF/CPS Report 1.B).

The region experiences extreme levels of formal sector unemployment - in the order of 50% of the black population (see UF/CPS Report 1.B). In conjunction with very rapid urban growth this exacerbates both the scale and degree of poverty in the area and aggravates the deteriorating economic and

physical conditions of the vast informally-housed population. Historically, the authorities in the region have been committed to forced removals of spontaneous settlements and the establishment of relocation site-and-service schemes, although attention is increasingly turning to upgrading (UF/CPS Report 1.B).

Bloemfontein/Botshabelo: "Returning to the Fold?"

The Bloemfontein/Botshabelo area had a total population of 601 700 in 1990, with a black population of 470 100. Informal settlement in the Bloemfontein region is



Map 3: Informal Settlement in Bloemfontein

concentrated in two places: Botshabelo and the township of Mangaung. Botshabelo was created in the late 1970s to accommodate relocated people from various parts of the Orange Free State and to divert growth from Bloemfontein. The population of this vast dormitory settlement is estimated to exceed 220 000, some 90 000 of whom are informally housed in a site-and-service scheme.

Botshabelo has a permanent but very limited employment base, and large numbers of people travel to work in Bloemfontein or in the Orange Free State Goldfields some

180km away. Recently, high costs of transport, low wages and the lack of employment opportunities in Botshabelo have resulted in a slow but noteworthy exodus of people from the settlement (Botes, Krige and Wessels, 1991). By contrast, informal settlement has increased in both Bloemfontein and the Goldfields, a trend which seems likely to continue.

Mangaung in Bloemfontein has witnessed the emergence of several free-standing settlements since the beginning of 1990 (Map 3 above). Eight so-called "squares"

contained in excess of 4 000 dwelling units by mid-October 1990 (Botes, Krige and Wessels, 1991). Survey material from Freedom, Namibia and Slovo squares indicates that most residents were former backyard dwellers or lodgers, but that 8% had moved to these new informal areas from Botshabelo (Botes, Krige and Wessels, 1991).

In contrast to the new free-standing enclaves that abut Mangaung on "buffer strip" land, the township has, over many years, developed a large lodger population, including people living in backyard shacks and outbuildings. The growth of this phenomenon can be attributed in part to the freeze on housing construction that was designed to encourage the apartheid-engineered development of Botshabelo. Since backyard shacks were actively discouraged by the Mangaung local authority, most Mangaung lodgers live in rooms appended to the original dwellings. No hard information on growth rates is available, but the number of rooms was estimated to be 8 000 in 1989, accommodating between 40 000 and 50 000 people (UF/CPS Report 1.C).

It is of interest to note that present-day Mangaung incorporates the "Bloemfontein Scheme", a prototype site-and-service project established in the 1920s where people were responsible for constructing their own houses (Morris, 1981). A renewed spirit of co-operation in the field of informal housing between the local authorities and informal dwellers has been noted in the Orange Free State (UF/CPS Report 1.C) and service and upgrading proposals have been developed for some of the "squatter" settlements.

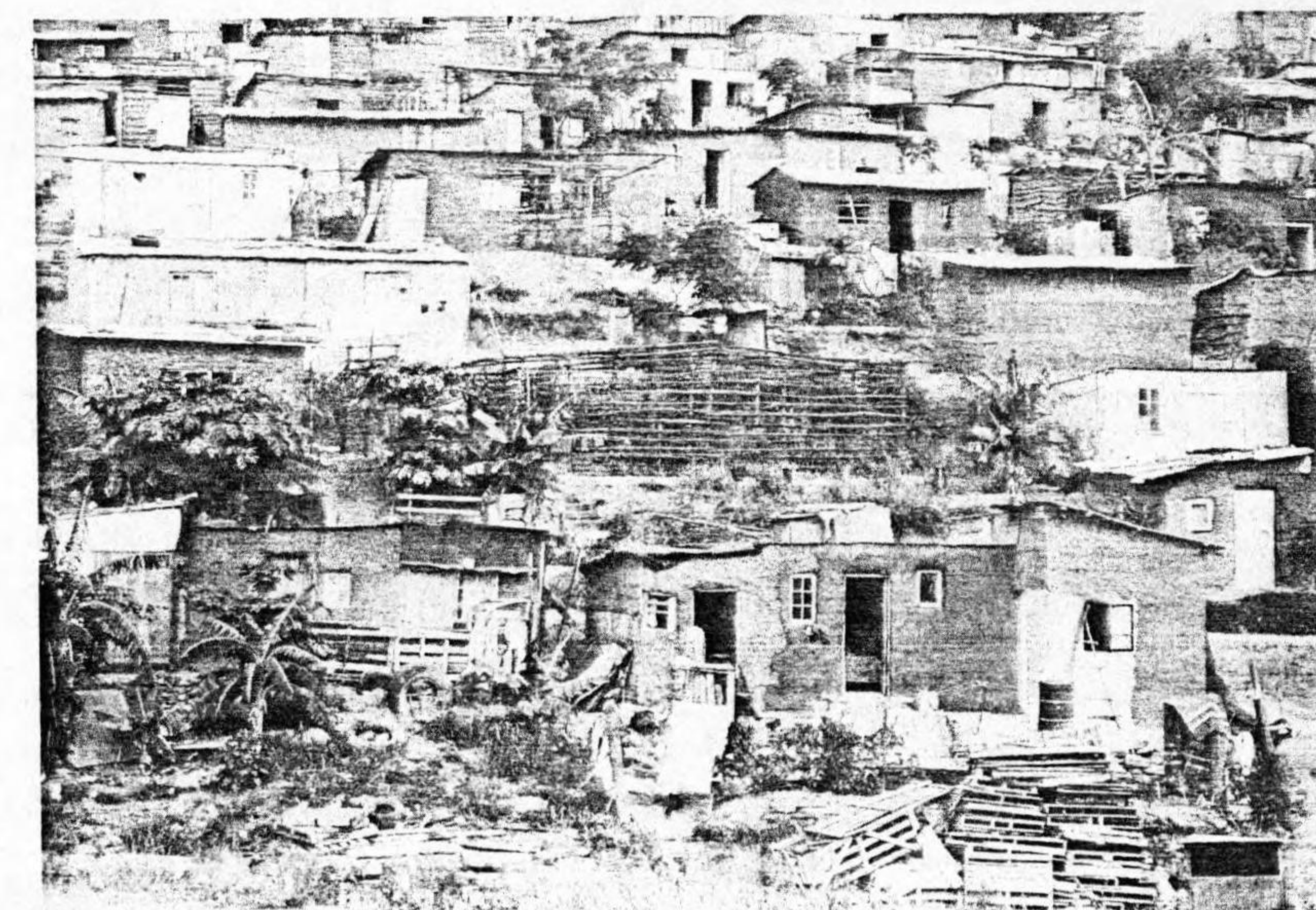
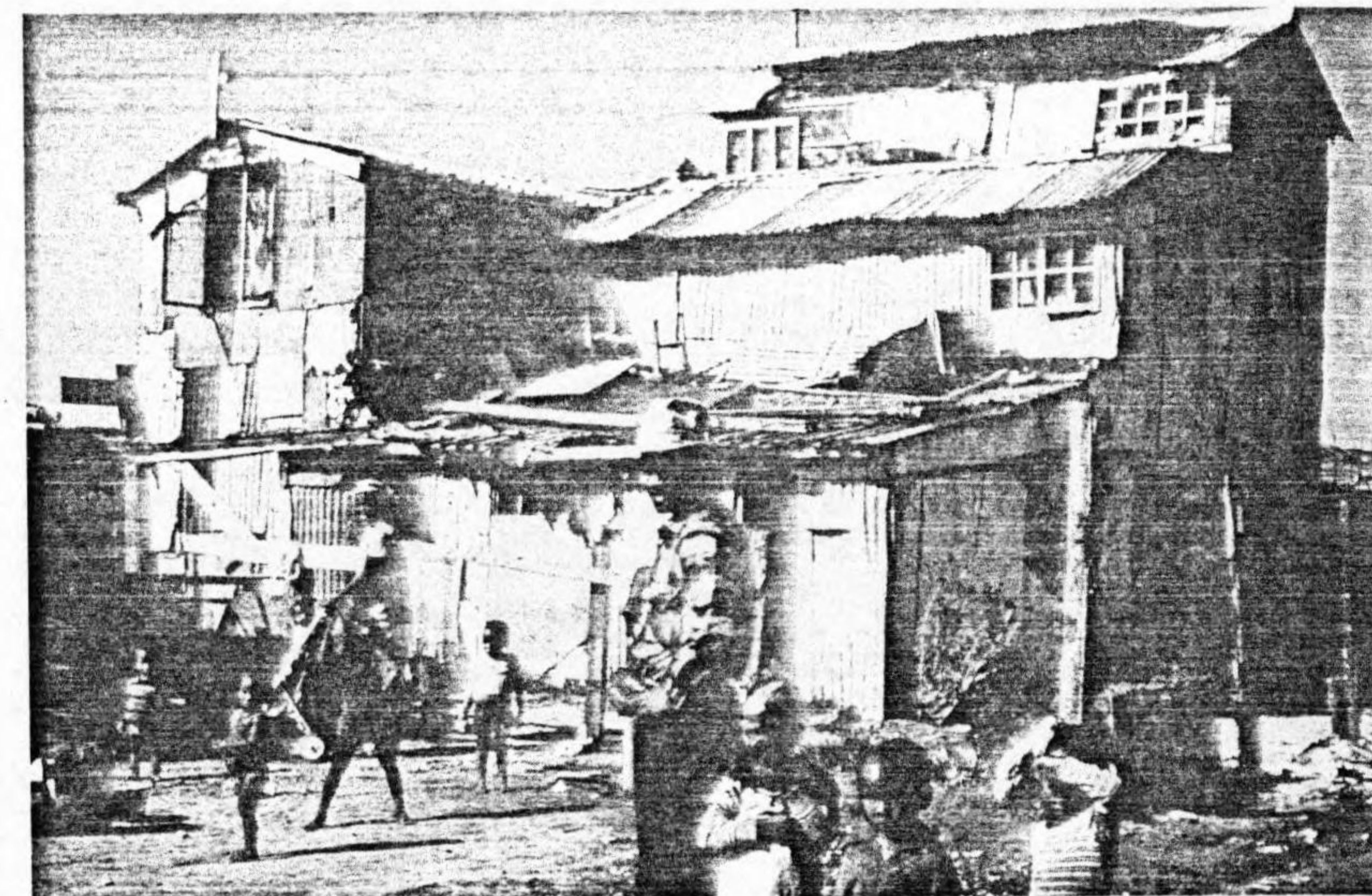
Cape Town: "Can the Growth Leader Cope?"

Cape Town appears to have overtaken Durban as the fastest growing metropolitan area in South Africa (UF/CPS Report 1.D). The total population of the area in 1990 was

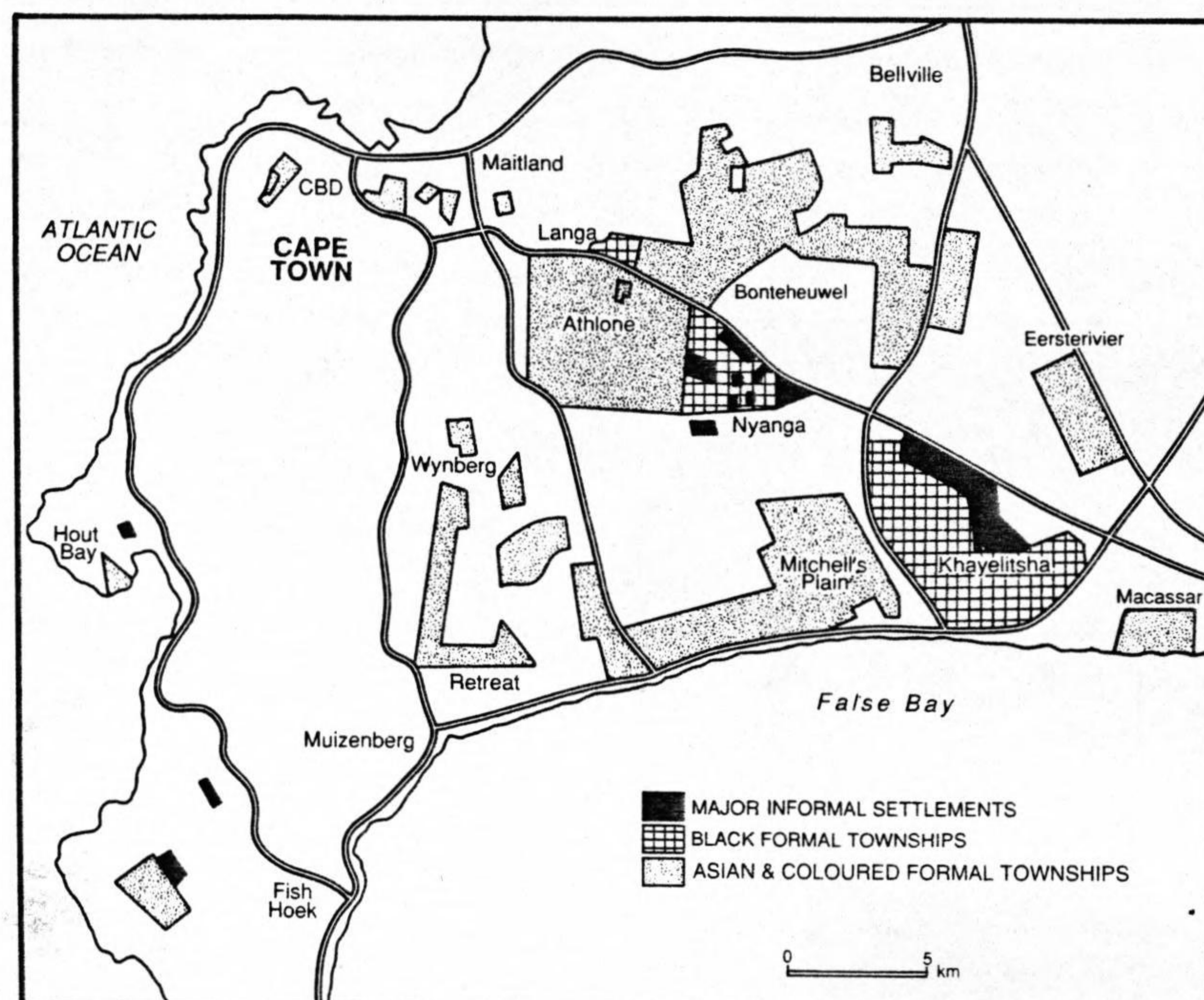
2 555 800, with a black population of 570 000. In 1990, the Western Cape President of the Institute of Professional Land Surveyors claimed that between 7 000 and 10 000 "squatters" were moving into the Cape Metropolitan area each month, concentrating mainly in Khayelitsha, Crossroads, KTC, Nyanga, Noordhoek and Hout Bay (see Map 4 on page 13) (UF/CPS Report 1.D; Dewar, Rosmarin and Watson, 1991). The Cape Town City engineer, however, placed the figure at 5 000 per month (UF/CPS Report 1.D).

While there is as yet no definitive research, several authoritative observers (see UF/CPS Report 1.D; Dewar, Rosmarin and Watson, 1991) suggest that the publicly estimated rates of in-migration might be exaggerated. According to these sources, in-migration estimates have underplayed the importance of ongoing circulatory migration (the process where people live in cities whilst maintaining a home elsewhere), as well as the movement of people from backyard shacks in the formal townships to the free-standing settlements. It should be noted, however, that whilst 20% of the Cape Town metropolitan area's 2,24 million population was black in 1985, it is projected that blacks will comprise about one third of a total population of 4 million by the year 2010 (see the **Population Trends** document). While considerable differences exist, official estimates suggest that the informal population is between 330 000 and 425 000 people, although unofficial estimates place this figure as high as half a million (UF/CPS Report 2).

In the Western Cape (UF/CPS Report 1.D), three dominant categories of spontaneous free-standing informal settlements exist, with differing levels of legal and *de facto* tenurial security. In the first instance, there are legal or "legalised" enclaves with local authority structures (Khayelitsha, Old Crossroads). Secondly, there are settlements where occupants have tacit permission to remain (Brown's Farm,



Informal Housing in Cape Town and Durban.



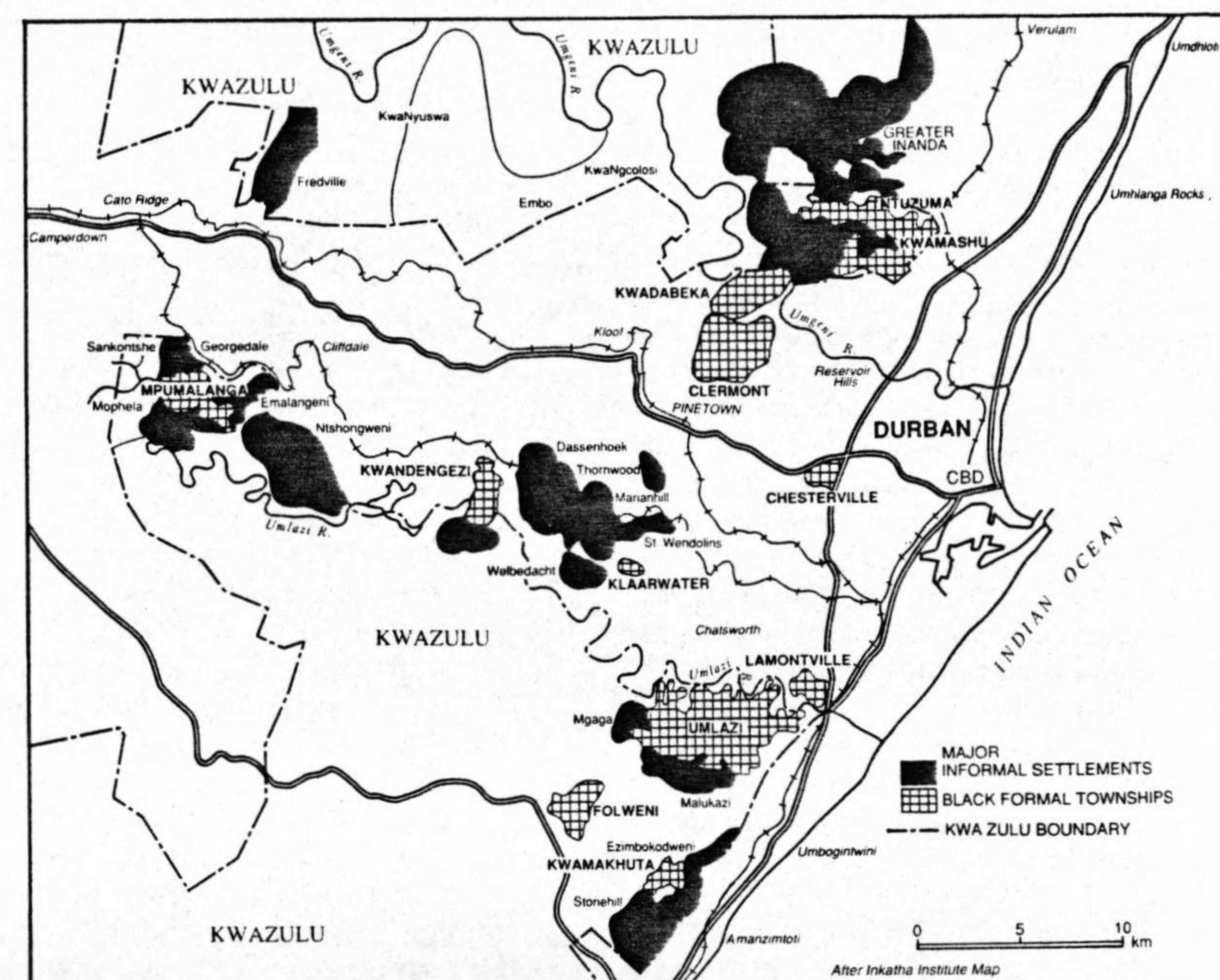
Map 4: Informal Settlement in Greater Cape Town

Miller's Camp). "Peri-urban" settlements, such as Hout Bay and Noordhoek, fall into the last category. Tenure status varies from place to place, but since some of the new peri-urban invasions have taken place close to established and affluent white communities, there have been strong interest-motivated lobbies for their removal. On the flats, Brown's Farm is now the fastest growing settlement in the region.

Black local authorities established to administer sanctioned informal settlements have received a mixed welcome, and conflict has continued to afflict many of the informal areas. In some places, “shacklords” continue to operate (see discussion of shacklords in Section Three and Section Four).

Durban: "A Familiar Informal Coat"

The growth of spontaneous free-standing settlements around Durban has been spectacular, accounting for the bulk of the increase in informal dwellings. In fact, Durban's rate of population growth in the 1970s paralleled the fastest growing cities in the world (see the **Population Trends** document). Its 1970 total population of approximately 1 million doubled over a 10 year period. Since then growth has been rapid but the rate is declining. This reduced growth rate notwithstanding, the Durban metropolitan area will have a population of some 4,4 million by the year 2000 and some 6 million by the year 2010 (see **UF Demographic Projection Model**). Through the 1980s, the number of shacks in the



Map 5: Informal Settlement in the Durban Functional Region

Durban Functional Region (DFR) has increased at an annual rate of 3 600 shacks (UND, 1990). Estimates vary, but it is clear that close to two-thirds of all dwelling units for blacks in the DFR are informal shacks. Over **40% of the total population** of the DFR, and more than **60% (i.e. 1,8 million people) of the black population** live in informal housing.

Although precise statistics on informal settlement within formal townships are not available, it is estimated that 40 000 people were located in backyard shacks and outbuildings in 1989 (UF/CPS Report 2). By contrast, it is estimated that free-standing settlements house approximately 1,8 million people (from UF/CPS Report 2; Tongaat-Hulett, 1989; UND, 1990). Some of these

are clustered on the periphery of the city, while others extend deep into Natal and KwaZulu (see Map 5 above). In general, informal settlement extends through the DFR in a broad semi-circular belt some 20 kilometres from central Durban. The main concentration has occurred in large complexes adjacent to formal townships. Shack settlements in Greater Inanda, around KwaMashu, Ntuzuma and KwaDabeka, account for approximately 600 000 people (Tongaat-Hulett, 1989). South of Umlazi township, informal settlements such as Malukazi, Mgaga and Ezimbokodweni accommodate around 320 000, and there are large settlements to the west in the Dassenhoek and Mpumalanga regions. The growth of informal settlements on the urban outskirts

is to a limited extent a reflection of rural to urban migration. Natural population growth and the formal housing shortage continue to play the major part in the growth of these informal settlements.

The proximity of KwaZulu to the metropolitan core (10 to 15km), and the relatively easy access that poor people have had to tribal land within the 'homeland' area, account in part for the scale of free-standing settlement around Durban by comparison with other metropolitan areas (see Map 5). Major settlements emerged as a result of land invasions in 1985 (UF/CPS Report 1.E). Most Natal/KwaZulu settlements are characterised by excessive, overlapping authority structures. Many different local authorities have jurisdiction over parts of the settlements. The ongoing and violent conflict in Natal has had profound repercussions on people living in informal conditions. "Shacklords" and "strongmen" (see Section Three) are numerous in such settlements (UF/CPS Report 1.E).

The PWV: "Infill and Overspill"

The UF sponsored PWV research programme (see Appendix A) has yielded accurate and detailed information on informal housing in the region. Half of the black population of the PWV lives in informal housing (i.e. 2,26 million). In terms of dwelling units (excluding hostels and flats), nearly 60% of the total of 976 755 black homes are informal. By far the majority of these (86%) are backyard shacks or outbuildings, whilst a minority (14%) are located in free-standing settlements (see Table 2 on page 16).

The available information shows that the number of **backyard structures** in existing formal townships has increased through the 1980s. One estimate suggests that the number of backyard shacks and occupied outbuildings increased by 30% to 496 176 between 1987 and 1989. Some of this increase can be attributed to the

establishment of informal housing on new residential sites, but there is also evidence that densities increased between 1987 and 1989. Whereas there were an estimated 0,61 informal dwellings per formal stand in 1987, the figure for 1989 is 0,68 (UF/CPS Report 3). The research indicates, however, that the population resident in backyard informal housing is growing less rapidly than the population of free-standing settlements.

In the early 1980s, substantial **free-standing settlements** appeared on the PWV for the first time since the 1950s (UF/CPS Report 2). In recent months, free-standing settlements have grown rapidly. The total number of shacks in free-standing settlements on the PWV increased from 28 500 in November 1987 to 49 200 units in late 1989. Moreover, the free-standing settlement population grew from 116 900 to 377 109. In other words, it **tripled** in the space of 2 years (UF/CPS Report 3).

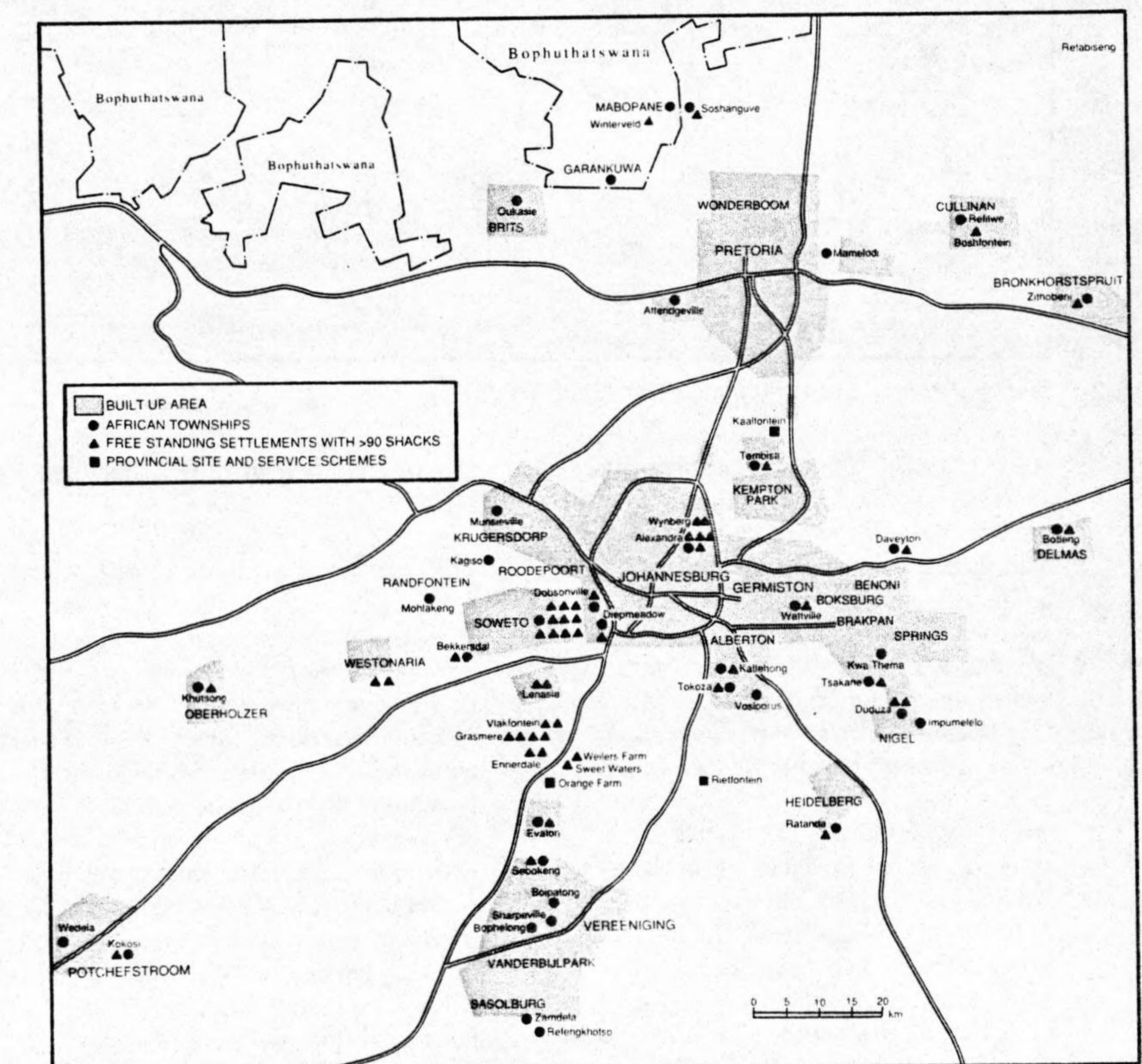
In 1990, there were approximately 47 free-standing settlements (each with more than 90 shacks) in total on the PWV. Of these, 25 settlements are located inside proclaimed black townships and 22 outside such townships. Despite the impression given by the mass-media, the 22 settlements outside of the proclaimed townships contain a small proportion of the total population housed in free-standing settlements. In fact, fully 85% of the total population of free-standing settlements lives **within** the proclaimed townships. The spatial distribution of these settlements across the PWV is summarised in Table 3 on page 17 and graphically depicted in Map 6 on page 16.

The rapid growth of free-standing settlements on the PWV is attributable to a number of factors. For example, the growth reflects the crisis response of growing numbers of poor people who have no other housing alternative. The survey research commissioned by the Urban Foundation on the PWV (UF/CPS Report 3) indicates that people living in free-standing settlements had, in 1990, an average household income of R450 per month,

TABLE 2 : INFORMAL POPULATION AND DWELLING UNITS, 1990

Informal Dwelling Type	Population (low estimate)		Dwelling Units	
Backyard shacks	1 173 804	(52%)	293 451	(51%)
Outbuildings	709 537	(31%)	202 725	(35%)
Free-standing settlements	377 109	(17%)	83 802	(14%)
Total	2 260 450		579 978	

Source: UF/CPS Report 3.



Map 6: Informal Settlement in the PWV

TABLE 3 : DISTRIBUTION OF FREE-STANDING INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS ON THE PWV, 1990

Within Proclaimed Townships	25 Settlements
Central Witwatersrand	13 settlements
West Rand	3 settlements
Johannesburg South/Vaal	—
East Rand	8 settlements
Pretoria/Northern PWV	1 settlement
Outside Proclaimed Townships	22 Settlements
Central Witwatersrand	5 settlements
West Rand	3 settlements
Johannesburg South/Vaal	12 settlements
East Rand	1 settlement
Pretoria/Northern PWV	1 settlement
Total Free-standing Settlements	47 Settlements

Source: UF/CPS Report 3.

although there was considerable variation within the settlements. By contrast, the average household income of backyard shackdwellers and the occupants of outbuildings was R750 per month, and that of people in formal houses R900. However, average monthly expenditure on accommodation in free-standing settlements was only R1.00 per month by comparison with R36 per month in backyard shacks. It seems therefore that many poor people live in free-standing settlements to keep accommodation costs as low as possible.

Other factors accounting for the rapid growth of free-standing settlements include:

- the saturation of certain areas in terms of backyard structure capacity;
- a perception that the response of the authorities to unauthorised settlement

- will not be as hostile as in the past;
- a possible increase in the rate of immigration to the PWV;
- a desire for privacy on the part of those who have shared rooms with other families in formal houses or backyard accommodation; and
- the staking of claims for sites in planned site-and-service schemes (physically occupying some land is sometimes perceived as a way of gaining access to an authorised stand).

Despite the high profile of free-standing settlement growth during the late 1980s, it must be noted that in terms of **absolute numbers**, more informal houses were erected in backyards between 1987 and 1989 than in the free-standing enclaves.

SUMMARY

In summary, the following points emerge from the overview of informal housing in the six cities selected:

- Informal housing is a major component of the overall housing stock in the country, accommodating over 7 million of the black metropolitan and urban population, against around 5 million in formal housing. In some cases, for example Durban, it is the **predominant** form of housing for the black population.
- The mix of informal housing types varies from place to place. The PWV is at one extreme with 86% of informal units comprising backyard shacks and outbuildings, and Durban is at the other with well in excess of 90% of the informally-housed population in free-standing settlements. These variations point to the need for flexibility in dealing with the phenomenon.
- The number of informal housing units has increased significantly in all of the areas discussed, with free-standing settlements showing the most rapid relative growth.

SITE-AND-SERVICE SCHEMES

Site-and-service schemes are not a recent phenomenon in South Africa⁷, but the numbers have increased dramatically in the past two decades, partly in response to local housing crises, but also as a device to rehouse communities relocated for political and other reasons⁸. At present there are probably in excess of 100 site-and-service schemes operated by provincial and associated local authorities nationwide

(Table 4 below), incorporating more than 150 000 residential sites. Well known examples are Orange Farm in the PWV, parts of Khayelitsha in Cape Town, Mfolweni near Durban and parts of Mangaung in Bloemfontein.

An alternative to "squatter" relocation to site-and-service schemes is "in-situ" upgrading, which is a process of assessing existing spontaneous settlements and if deemed feasible making interventions to

TABLE 4 : SITE-AND-SERVICE SCHEMES OPERATED BY PROVINCIAL AND/OR LOCAL AUTHORITIES, 1991

	Schemes	Sites
Transvaal	14 ^a	51 190
Natal	30	23 086
Orange Free State	23	26 897
Cape Province	32 ^b	57 273
Total	99	158 446

^a Provincial schemes only, excluding the Potchefstroom and Witbank regions.

^b Excluding schemes established prior to 1986.

Source: Transvaal, Natal, Orange Free State and Cape provincial authorities.

establish the settlements on a legal and permanent basis. Emphasis falls on improving conditions with the minimum displacement of the community. Whilst site-and-service has been implemented on a modest but significant scale in various parts of the country, upgrading remains relatively untried. Pilot upgrading projects have recently been initiated at Bester's near Durban and at Soweto-on-Sea in Port Elizabeth. Other examples are upgrading initiatives at Miller's Camp in Cape Town and Freedom Square in Bloemfontein.

The section that follows examines the characteristics of the people that occupy informal housing.

INFORMAL SETTLERS: A PWV CASE STUDY

Until recently, little was known about the people living in informal housing in and around South African cities and towns. This lack of information can be attributed to the fluidity of informal settlement, the understandable reticence of "illegals" to provide information, to a failure on the part of officials to recognise informal settlers as a significant component of the urban population, and to the fact that a great deal of informal housing in the PWV has been "hidden" in the backyards. This "blind spot" is now being rectified by Urban Foundation and other research, but a great deal remains to be done.

The most comprehensive informal housing research yet undertaken in South Africa is the Urban Foundation-sponsored PWV study (see Appendix A). The section that follows draws from this work, but due to the regional variability of informal settlement, few generalisations are attempted for the remainder of the country, except where these can be substantiated from reliable research. **What can be said by way of generalisation, however, is that it is dangerous to impose stereotypes on the residents of informal housing, wherever they are.**

Social Characteristics

Considerable myth and ignorance obscure the social and economic character of the urban populations that occupy various forms of informal housing. The sub-group in spontaneous free-standing settlements, in particular, is sometimes inaccurately stigmatised as an unemployed, politically volatile and parasitic group that has swept into cities from the countryside, especially since the abolition of influx control. Elements of this cliché may be valid in particular circumstances, but the reality is far more complex.

In the PWV for example, urban origins outweigh rural (see below). Further, images of a general state of destitution are false. In fact, there is a distinct socio-economic hierarchy across PWV informal housing types. At the one extreme are the occupants of outbuildings, whose socio-economic status approaches that of households in formal housing. The residential strategies of people in outbuildings are driven less by the question of affordability than by the shortage of housing. Outbuildings often receive the "spill-over" from the group that is able to afford formal housing, and hence share a similar socio-economic profile.

At the other extreme are the shack dwellers in spontaneous free-standing settlements, where the lowest socio-economic levels are found. Here income constraints (exacerbated by recession and unemployment) play a greater role in household housing strategies, with the low accommodation costs of free-standing settlements providing a route to basic shelter. Between these poles, the incomes and employment levels of backyard shack dwellers are in some cases comparable to those of outbuilding occupants, whilst in other cases they approach those of free-standing settlement residents. It is not unusual for people to move from backyard shacks to free-standing settlements in circumstances of reduced income (UF/CPS Report 3).

The following are further characteristics of the informally-housed population of the PWV (UF/CPS Report 3):

- **Origins and movement of informal housing occupants:** Of all people in informal housing on the PWV, 49% were born in the PWV region and a further 22% in other metropolitan and urban areas (including peri-urban fringe areas). Altogether 72% of informal dwellers had been in the PWV for ten years or longer. Around 65% of free-standing settlement residents and 74% of backyard shack dwellers are of **urban** rather than rural origin. There is evidence that growing numbers of informal housing occupants in the PWV are new in-migrants. Some 16% of the sample had arrived after 1987. Important source areas are the Transkei and Ciskei, followed by urban areas in Natal.

In the late 1980s, the informally-housed population has been remarkably mobile within the PWV. This can be attributed in part to the emergence of new informal settlement options, and to overcrowding pressures in township backyards. It is noted that findings from Bloemfontein (Botes, Krige and Wessels, 1991) and Durban (Schlemmer *et al.*, 1985) underline movement from areas within the city as a major source of free-standing settlement growth, challenging the stereotype of these areas as

predominantly reception areas for rural migrants.

- **Motivations for living in informal settlements:** Among PWV survey respondents, housing shortages, affordability considerations and a desire for space and autonomy are the major reasons for living in informal circumstances. For many (30%), the informal settlement strategy is simply dictated by the lack of alternative shelter. The fact that most informal settlement occurs near major employment areas, however, emphasises the importance of proximity to employment opportunities. Predictably, low rentals are the reason many free-standing settlement residents chose (or were pushed into) that form of informal housing.
- **Patterns of employment:** Although households in informal housing generally have lower incomes than their counterparts in formal housing (see pages 15; 17), it is striking that levels of unemployment do not seem to be higher in the informal areas. Some 23% of the sample aged 18-65 in formal housing were actively seeking work⁹, compared with 21%, 20% and 16% in backyard shacks, free-standing settlements and outbuildings respectively. In addition, levels of formal employment differ little across the housing categories (Table 5 below).

TABLE 5 : FORMAL EMPLOYMENT OF BLACK HOUSEHOLDS ON THE PWV, 1990

Dwelling Type	Proportion of Economically Active Age Group Employed
Formal houses	48%
Backyard shacks	52%
Free-standing settlements	44%
Outbuildings	51%

Source: UF/CPS Report 3.

Hence, using the wider urban black population as a reference, it is possible to argue that **PWV informal housing residents are to a considerable extent a part of the urban regional economy.** A similar conclusion has emerged from research into free-standing settlements in Bloemfontein (Botes, Krige and Wessels, 1991).

- **Educational and skills profiles:** In parallel with incomes, a clear hierarchy of education and skills is evident across the residents of the three dominant informal housing types in the PWV. For example, 26% of the employed population in outbuildings is unskilled, compared with 33% and 41% in backyard shacks and free-standing settlements respectively. Not one of the free-standing settlement respondents included in the Urban Foundation survey had matric or a vocational qualification, whereas these qualifications were not uncommon in formal housing and backyard shacks. Skills profiles similar to those recorded in the PWV have been reported in free-standing settlements in Durban and Bloemfontein (42% and 40% unskilled respectively) (Botes, Krige and Wessels, 1991; Tongaat-Hulett, 1989).

- **Household structure:** The majority of households in informal housing (86%) are nuclear family units, in contrast to formal houses which accommodate a greater number of non-nuclear households. This suggests that informal housing is often selected by families seeking independence and privacy. Young people are well represented across all dwelling types. Free-standing settlements and backyard shacks have a higher proportion (18%) of young children (0-5 years) than formal houses and outbuildings (13%). In general, outbuilding households support fewer dependents and have a greater proportion of persons in economically active age categories than other types of informal housing.

Contrary to the perception of informal settlements as uniformly impoverished communities living on the margins of the urban economy, the informal population is as heterogeneous and economically integrated as the formally housed population. For the most part, although they differ in terms of income, skills and education, informal and formal households are similar in many socio-economic characteristics. **Therefore, the informally-housed population cannot be crudely labelled as a social and economic anomaly. In many respects it should be seen as an extension of the formally-housed urban black population, definable primarily by the style of housing which is adopted.**

Commitment to the City

Several observers of dynamics within informal settlements have recently noted the importance of what is termed "**circulatory migration**" (see Glossary on page 24) (Dewar, Rosmarin and Watson, 1991; Mabin, 1990). While there will be differences of interpretation, circulatory migration in informal areas refers to a process of regular but temporary and relatively short-term migration to the cities. Those involved in circulatory migration generally regard the locales from which they have come (rural areas, closer or dense settlements, small towns etc.) as their permanent abodes. Typically a circulatory migrant comes to the city in search of employment, which often takes the form of short-duration contract work. Such people might live in the city during the working week only. In seeking to minimize accommodation costs in the city, since their investments in housing occur elsewhere, circulatory migrants will often erect the most rudimentary shelters in free-standing settlements. Usually circulatory migrants will have no intention of upgrading these structures.

Circulatory migration may have substantial significance for informal settlement policy. If, for example, most of the inhabitants of free-standing shack settlements are circulatory

migrants, it follows that upgrading interventions are likely to be less effective. So too are site-and-service schemes since circulatory migrants may not want to buy into such schemes or incur regular service charges. A key issue then, is the magnitude of circulatory migration in informal housing, and particularly in free-standing settlements.

While circulatory migration has been noted in locales such as Cape Town, East London, Durban and the PWV, hard information is scarce. The Urban Foundation's PWV research is, however, of assistance. Several key indicators suggest that circulatory migration between the rural areas and the PWV's informal housing enclaves is likely to be relatively limited:

- As mentioned before, 44% of free-standing settlement residents were born in the PWV region. The figure for

backyard shacks and outbuildings is 50% and the majority of in-migrants have lived on the PWV for more than ten years.

- Only approximately 10% of informal housing occupants in the PWV still have strong ties outside the region, with dependents resident in those areas.

Of course, the evidence presented above is hardly conclusive, and it refers to a single metropolitan region, albeit the largest. It has been shown that circulatory migration is very significant in the smaller metropolitan area of Cape Town (Dewar, Rosmarin and Watson, 1991), and further research will certainly reveal considerable variation across the country.

SUMMARY

The socio-economic profile of PWV informal housing residents can be crystallised in the following key points:

- Informal residents are similar to their formally housed township counterparts in several respects, for example, in terms of levels of formal employment and age distribution.
- Informal settlers are of mixed origin, reflecting both urban "overspill" and migration from both rural areas and urban centres.
- The major difference between the population occupying formal housing and the informal residents is in terms of education, skills, occupational levels and incomes.
- There is preliminary evidence that limited numbers of informal housing occupants in the PWV have strong family and residential commitments elsewhere.
- It is too early to attempt nationwide generalisations arising out of the PWV survey results. However, overall results regarding the mixed origin of informal settlers and the relative poverty of free-standing settlement dwellers seem likely to be substantiated nationally.

OVERVIEW

South Africa faces a housing crisis of considerable magnitude. One of the consequences of this situation is that informal housing has become a major and established component of the South African landscape. While informal housing occurs predominantly within existing proclaimed black townships or behind homeland boundaries, it is becoming increasingly widespread. Clearly, "squatting" and the growth of shacks are not a direct consequence of the abolition of influx control, and informal settlements are not made up of pools of people flooding in from the rural areas. Instead, **the inhabitants of these informal settlements are mostly long-standing urban residents forced into shacks through the shortage of housing and their own poverty.** Moreover, it is clear

that informal dwellers are not a marginal and parasitic underclass grappling on the edges of the cities. Rather they are integrated into the socio-economy of the cities in which they are located.

Informal housing takes different forms in various parts of the country. In some urban areas most informal housing is accommodated in large free-standing settlements and there is a low incidence of backyard shacks or outbuildings. In others, backyard shacks and outbuildings predominate. The explanations for this variability can be traced to a variety of local factors. In any event it is quite clear that strategies for dealing with informal housing will require different emphases in different places. It is also clear that throughout the country, informal housing is proliferating rapidly.

Section Endnotes

1. Subject to the definition of informal housing outlined under "Clarification of Terms and Concepts". "Urban" refers to metropolitan and other urban centres in the "common" and "homeland" areas of South Africa. See **Population Trends** document. Of the 7 million, around 5 million are located in and around the major metropolitan areas of the PWV, Durban, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London and Bloemfontein (see Table 1). The remaining 2 million are situated in and around other cities such as Pietermaritzburg and the OFS Goldfields, in smaller cities and towns such as Witbank/Middleburg and Kroonstad, and dense settlements such as Bushbuckridge in the Eastern Transvaal.
2. Including Johannesburg, East Rand, West Rand, Pretoria and Vereeniging (including Vanderbijlpark and Sasolburg), and excluding the most outlying areas. See **UF Demographic Projection Model** for more detail.
3. In this document, the term "black" is used to refer to Africans, and not in the broader sense of all people who are not white.
4. The total black population figures in the table are derived from the UF Demographic Projection Model. The total black population of the PWV is given for the slightly smaller definition of the area utilised in the UF/CPS study. This area is essentially the same as the PWV definition used in the UF Demographic Projection Model although the areas of Moretele II, Odi Bafokeng and KwaNdebele are excluded. In terms of the estimates of the informal population, apart from the PWV where the research programme yielded accurate statistics, figures for the other metropolitan areas are at best broad estimates. The figures in the table have been derived from a range of estimates obtained during the national monitoring portion of the project (see UF/CPS Report 1.A-G). These estimates vary widely, however, and are often based on informed speculation. The paucity of accurate statistics on informal housing in the major metropolitan areas outside of the PWV emphasises the need for further research in the vein of UF/CPS study conducted on the PWV.
5. This figure is an earlier and higher estimate than that obtained from the **UF Demographic Projection Model**.
6. The material used in the biographies was collected mainly in 1989 and early 1990. Of course, some situations may have changed in recent times.

7. A prototype site-and-service scheme was established in Bloemfontein in the 1920s. It was part of a strategy to rehouse "squatters", and offered access to subsidised serviced sites (Morris, 1981). Many of the houses still stand today.
8. A 1983 survey of 18-site-and-service schemes showed the majority (10) were based on relocations. Among these were Inanda Newtown and Mfolweni (in Natal), Constantia (Kroonstad) established to house people moved from another part of the formal townships, and steilloopbrug (Lebowa) established to rehouse people moved from formal townships in northern Transvaal towns (Hart, 1983).
9. This is a useful index of unemployment, since it excludes those who cannot work (such as disabled people).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Backyard shacks	:	Informal dwelling structures erected on residential properties in formal legal townships. Some accommodate family overspill, while others generate rent for the owner or legal tenant of the property.
Circulatory migration	:	Regular but temporary migration to the city. The place of origin (such as a rural area or small town) is usually regarded as the permanent abode and a rudimentary shelter is often utilised while in the city.
Free-standing settlements	:	Clusters of informal dwellings located within townships, in buffer zones or on other land. Some are 'illegal' settlements, while others are planned site-and-service schemes.
Informal housing	:	Shelter usually constructed with unconventional building materials acquired informally, that is, outside of the formal housing delivery mechanisms.
Informal settlement	:	Settlements where communities are housed and located initially in informal housing.
Outbuildings	:	Backyard structures such as garages or flats which are used for residential purposes, but which are constructed from conventional building materials.
Site-and-service schemes	:	Identification and preparation of land before settlement takes place. Land is laid out and basic infrastructural services provided. Serviced sites may then be purchased on which people initially erect informal housing. Further consolidation and upgrading follow, including the replacement of informal housing with formal dwellings.
Squatting	:	The unsanctioned and illegal use of land or dwellings belonging to other parties for shelter. Specific definitions of squatting differ considerably between countries.

SECTION THREE : THE POLITICS OF INFORMAL HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

The arena of informal housing is characterised by a complex package of political processes operating at several levels. This is due to several factors. In the first instance, **people in spontaneous informal housing are often excluded from formal political structures and institutions** at the local and the national level. This is particularly true of free-standing settlements, which have no formal and legal status, and hence no recognised local authority. Numerous communities have sought to fill this administrative and service-provision vacuum with structures of their own. Some examples are discussed below under the heading **Popular Action**.

Outbuildings and backyard shacks usually fall under the jurisdiction of township local authorities, but the relationship is complex. In many areas, backyard residents appear to have been reluctantly accepted, but there have been cases where the occupants of "illegal" backyard dwellings were harassed by local government officials, especially before the abolition of the Administration Boards in 1986¹.

Second, **the nature of political organisation around spontaneous informal housing is strongly influenced by the vulnerability and insecurity of the residents, and by their need to gain access to land, tenure, shelter and services**. In this context, organisation is sometimes parochial, issue-focused and transitory. However, established political and civic groups are showing increased interest in informal housing, and have recently sought to extend their influence in this hitherto neglected constituency. Such developments are discussed under the heading **Local Politics**.

Third, **by its nature spontaneous housing is susceptible to conflict**. At one level this is due to confrontation among groups

seeking to gain influence in informal settlements. At another level it has to do with the relationship between informal settlement occupants, and surrounding communities. In some cases these conflicts revolve around access to land and resources, but race and class issues are also evident. The diversity and depth of conflict around informal housing is discussed under **Dimensions of Conflict** below.

Land Invasion is a visible and emotive expression of political organisation. It combines local and national political agendas, and in many ways it focuses conflict. The nature and extent of land invasion in South Africa is discussed at the end of this Section.

POPULAR ACTION : THE D.I.Y. OPTION

It is important to avoid romanticising the crisis-driven self-help efforts of households desperate to secure suitable shelter. Popular action in terms of informal housing often speaks of determination and ingenuity, but in many situations it also entails considerable hardship in the face of obstacles such as tenurial insecurity, a lack of finance, and the absence of basic technical advice and assistance. From another perspective, however, informal housing represents a constructive response by homeless people to the housing crisis in South Africa.

The human and financial investment expressed in informal housing of diverse kinds throughout South Africa is impressive by most standards. For the investors (the residents), the returns are mixed and often unpredictable, but in some instances grass-roots informal settler organisations have succeeded in making modest, incremental progress toward better housing and residential environments. In the PWV free-standing settlement of Phola Park, for example, a residents' committee has spearheaded not only the battle against removals, but also the acquisition of an emergency water supply (the water tanker supplied by World Vision). In Oakmoor (also on the PWV), the "squatter" committee



Local Initiative in Action: Community Creche in Vlakkfontein

succeeded in introducing 14 taps with the aid of local industrialists. Spontaneous community initiative is also evident in Miller's Camp in Cape Town where residents have dumped waste materials in a badly-drained area with a view to "filling" the site and reclaiming it for housing use. Moreover, the Miller's Camp community has co-operated in the moving of certain shacks to improve access and create rudimentary roads. The positive energy and capability of people in informal settlements is clearly illustrated in the PWV free-standing settlement of Vlakkfontein (see box on page 27).

Community action does not guarantee a safe and healthy informal residential environment, since such action might be constrained by physical, social and legal factors. The case of Oakmoor in Tembisa is one where it is difficult to imagine truly effective local upgrading without disruptive and unpopular relocation of selected residents for the purpose of dedensification (see Glossary on page 35) (Housing Policy Unit, 1990).

Among backyard dwellers, there is most often no "community" to promote and drive collective efforts seeking to improve residential conditions. Whilst the infill-nature of backyard shack and outbuilding informal housing has to some extent insulated it from anti-"squatter" campaigns, it has not had the advantage of the community cohesiveness present in some free-standing areas.

LOCAL POLITICS

Informal settler organisation tends to result from specific impulses: either grave dangers such as the threat of removals, the removals themselves, or the need to secure water, refuse removal and sanitation services, or access to health and education. As a corollary, these organisations are often fragile and temporary, ceasing once the original issue has been settled, or the terrain has changed. Alternatively, in the absence of such issues, there is often an organisational gap. For example:

POPULAR ACTION IN VLAKFONTEIN

The informal settlement of Vlakfontein is located 35km south of Johannesburg and has been in existence since the early 1980s. The settlement is relatively well organised through a community-based committee. An elected residents' committee regulates the development of the area including the layout and allocation of sites. The sites provided at Vlakfontein are relatively large (about 250m²) and are laid out along clearly demarcated roads. Residents are obliged to dig pit latrines and refuse pits on their sites.

Residents' contributions and donations from other sources are mobilised to facilitate community development in this settlement. Through these donations, the community funds a full-time clinic and a creche, and is currently building classrooms. Funds for the installation of water have been provided by a large corporation and options in this regard are being investigated. The community has its own full-time "mayor" or senior civil servant whose salary is paid through monthly contributions from the community. Structures in the settlement are rudimentary but relatively spacious and well-kept. Gardens are apparent on some sites and several shacks are being converted into formal structures. Residents claim that crime is virtually absent in the community and that most houses are left unlocked during the day.

The remarkable initiative and energy that is evident in Vlakfontein has occurred despite the fact that the settlement is unauthorised and under threat. The settlement, currently on land owned by the House of Delegates, has been threatened with relocation to a site-and-service scheme, Orange Farm, further to the south (Crankshaw and Hart, 1990; Crankshaw, Hart and McNamara, 1988).

■ In the case of the Fred Clark "squatter" camp in Soweto, it is reported that leaders of the Committee disappeared from the community once they had secured their own formal houses, leaving a leaderless vacuum in their wake (UF/CPS Report 4).

■ In Natal, at the "squatter" camp of Malukazi, the level of community organisation is low. This might be a consequence of the perceived lack of any threat of removal, the fact that there is access to water, as well as access to a range of services in Umlazi, which is near enough to be convenient (Madlala and Zulu, 1988).

■ One of the "squatter" committees originally based at Weiler's Farm does not, however, conform to this pattern. Formed to combat the removal of the settlement, it has survived relocation and continues to operate in Orange Farm.

As informal housing and especially "squatting" have become increasingly visible and contentious political issues, diverse political groups have begun to vie for support and influence in free-standing "squatter" settlements, and among the occupants of other forms of informal housing.

■ The Sofasonke Party is a case in point (UF/CPS Report 4). Around the time of the 1988 municipal elections, it moved beyond the formal townships to extend its influence in "squatter" camps in Chicken Farm and Mshenguville in Soweto. Similarly, organisations affiliated to the UDF and ANC have also begun to work in informal settlements. UDF affiliated civic organisations, who have generally concentrated their energies on formal townships, have taken a new interest in organising "squatters". The UDF at one stage encouraged land invasions by "squatters" (see "Land Invasions"

below), although they later rescinded the call (Urbanisation Unit, 1990). It would appear, however, that a new approach partly supportive of the invasion of unoccupied land is emerging among Transvaal civics, as expressed through CAST (New Nation, 21-27 September 1990).

■ There are, however, cases in which the civics have been organising around "squatter" issues for some time. In Mangaung near Bloemfontein, the local civic organised a land invasion into a "squatter" camp known as Freedom Square (see box below). The "squatter" committee in Freedom Square is an offshoot of the Mangaung civic. Likewise, in Port Elizabeth, the local civic, Pepco, has long been active in the "squatter" areas.

The concerns of backyard shack dwellers are not typically a central issue for civic associations, since disputes (for example between landlords and tenants) are often isolated. In the PWV township of Alexandra, the civic association has recently taken up the cause of the occupants of outbuildings (which are often quite substantial) who are threatened by the sale of the

properties on which they have built.

■ In the Transvaal, on the Reef, an organisation called Operation Masekane for the Homeless (Omhle) has recently been established to address "squatter" issues across the whole spread of "squatter" settlements. Omhle is affiliated to the UDF and the ANC and aims to secure elected, representative committees in each settlement. In a sense, Omhle would like to act as an umbrella civic body for these settlements.

Without detailed case study material, it is not possible to assess whether the energy of groups claiming to uphold and defend the interests of people in informal housing has greatly facilitated an improvement in living conditions. The record is probably mixed, depending on the capacity of organisations to deliver critical resources such as land and water, and on the degree to which they enjoy support among the groups they seek to represent. The case of Freedom square, Mangaung is one in which, following the land invasion organised by the Mangaung Civic Association, the Civic and Provincial Authorities have succeeded in working together to improve the settlement (Urbanisation Unit, 1990).

FREEDOM SQUARE, BLOEMFONTEIN

On 18 February 1990, backyard shackdwellers began to move from the overcrowded stands of Mangaung onto vacant land to the east of the township (Urbanisation Unit, 1990). This represented the first major invasion in the OFS, and within one week almost 500 shacks were erected in 'Freedom Square'. The land invasion was orchestrated by the Mangaung Civic Association according to a register of homeless people in Mangaung. 'Freedom Square' comprised sites of approximately 200m², which were laid out in an organised grid pattern with wide road reserves.

The invaded land belonged to the House of Representatives and was earmarked for an extension to the township of Heidedal. In a widely praised move, the OFS Provincial Administration (OFS PA) negotiated a land exchange with the House of Representatives, allowing the invaded land to be allocated to Mangaung for the development of a site-and-service scheme. The OFS PA laid out sites of around 240m² and graded roads on the vacant eastern portion of the land. Some relocations from the invaded sites onto surveyed sites were arranged by the Mangaung Civic Association, permitting a reduction of residential densities. Further road grading on the remainder of the sites was then possible.

Free-standing informal settlements are sometimes the personal power bases of individual strongmen, often referred to as "shacklords" (see Glossary on page 35). These people run their settlements along highly autocratic lines, allocating sites and securing services in return for rent and allegiance from the inhabitants. They often run "private armies" with which they maintain discipline and enforce their power, and sometimes mobilise the community for specific political purposes. From the viewpoint of supplying basic services, the shacklords might be seen to facilitate informal settlement. But the cost in terms of insecurity, dependence and exploitation is often high.

Residents in informal housing, and especially "squatters", are both vulnerable and open to conflict. In the past, the key area of vulnerability has been the threat and reality of removals. Although this threat has been reduced, it has not disappeared altogether. There is no doubt that growing *de facto* security offers organisations greater scope to form and consolidate. It is precisely this newly opening political space for organisation, however, that admits further danger of conflict. Certainly in the case of those areas run by shacklords, the past decade has seen numerous examples of violence as those in power in the settlements both crush opposition and resist all attempts to remove them. Now, as the civics and organisations like Omhle move into "squatter" areas, the potential for such conflict increases.

DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICT

Conflict around informal settlement has intensified considerably in the past year. It has manifested itself in violent confrontation (for example the bloody incidents in the PWV free-standing settlements of Phola Park (September 1990) and Swanieville (May 1991)) but also in simmering tensions between antagonists with a variety of political and material interests. The primary focus of conflict has been the free-standing settlements, partly because they represent significant intrusions into previously relatively stable and unthreatened residential environments, but also because

they draw together substantial groups of people with diverse political affiliations and allegiances. The conflict has been manifest in a number of forms, but six key contexts can be identified (UF/CPS Reports 4 and 5):

Conflict within informal settlements:

Tensions and violent conflict between factions within informal settlements have become a disturbingly regular phenomenon. The causes of such conflict are varied and complex. Sometimes conflict has stemmed from power struggles between self-appointed leaders or shacklords. On other occasions, the causes of conflict relate to the control of scarce resources, for example the challenge to traditional modes of land allocation in Natal (Kitchin, 1989). On still other occasions, the conflict has had political or ideological origins (witness the conflict between Inkatha and ANC-linked movements in Natal) (see box on conflict on page 31, especially items on shacklords in Natal and Crossroads).

Conflict with formal townships: This situation is prevalent when free-standing informal settlements emerge either within or on the outskirts of formal townships, and competition for limited resources, such as water or education facilities, occurs. In such instances, the informal settlements lack basic services and residents are thus often dependent on the good-will of the residents of the formal township for access to resources. Tensions and conflict around this relationship are mostly locally expressed and therefore not obvious to outside observers. However, with the growth of unserviced informal housing enclaves close to townships it must be expected that they will become more widespread.

Conflict with hostel dwellers: A recent variation of conflict between informal housing residents and people in "formal" conditions has been the series of violent confrontations between hostel dwellers and "squatters" (for example, events in Phola Park and Swanieville; see box on conflict on page 33). Political differences play a significant role here, but the potential for conflict is heightened by the insecurity felt by both sets of antagonists.

Conflict with high income neighbours:

The recent growth of free-standing shack settlements outside of proclaimed black townships has focused public attention on informal housing and precipitated conflicts with race, class and lifestyle overtones. Free-standing settlements have for example emerged in or near high- and medium-income white (Hout Bay, Noordhoek, Midrand, Gonubie, Sandton), asian (Lenasia), coloured (Rabie Ridge, Missionvale) and black (Dobsonville) communities. While the responses of the high income communities have been varied, resistance has tended to be the focus of vocal lobbies. Events in Hout Bay are particularly illustrative (see box on conflict on page 32).

Conflict between authorities and high-income residents: Related to the race and class tensions discussed above, conflicts have developed between the authorities and the residents of high-income suburbs over the designation of land for informal housing. The events surrounding the identification and development of land for informal housing in Midrand illustrate the generally negative responses of high-income neighbouring communities (see box on conflict on page 32).

The Midrand situation highlights the fact that class conflicts (often with racial overtones) over the location of informal housing are increasing. Urban Foundation research (UF/CPS Report 5) shows that widely-held attitudes underpin the antipathy of formally-housed higher income residents to nearby

informal settlements. In a survey of low income communities close to free-standing settlements in the PWV, it was found that few respondents saw any local benefit deriving from proximate informal enclaves, apart from labour. Most feared an increase in crime and random violence, and a drop in local property values.

Conflict with authorities: One of the most pervasive and persistent forms of conflict is that between the authorities and the residents of informal housing. Very often the conflict has been triggered by attempts to demolish settlements or backyard dwellings. Responses have varied, but forced removal has frequently precipitated violent resistance. Resistance to the removal of 50 000 people from Langa to KwaNobuhle in 1987 merged into a broader front of revolt in the Eastern Cape, but it also spawned destructive vigilante activity aimed at suppressing resistance (UF/CPS Report 1.D). After the central government indicated in 1986 (in the White Paper on Urbanisation) that it would no longer involve itself in forced relocations, the frequency of forced relocations declined somewhat. In 1990, however, a spate of demolitions and removals occurred, particularly in the PWV (*inter alia* in Vanderbijlpark, Daveyton, Tembisa, Dobsonville, Boksburg, Tokoza (Phola Park), Katlehong, Midrand, Allanridge, Ventersburg and Kraaifontein). As will be elaborated in **Informal Housing: Part Two**, most of these demolitions and forced relocations have been initiated and executed by local authorities.

THE DIVERSITY OF CONFLICT AROUND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

The following examples of conflicts around spontaneous informal settlements in South Africa reveal a range of causes and dynamics. It should be noted, however, that examples have been selected specifically for illustration.

Shacklords in Natal

The term "warlord" (or more accurately shacklord), is a part of everyday political vocabulary in Natal (Darch, 1989). The term is often applied to individuals who have created their political constituencies through their access to land. In essence, conditions of insecurity and the lack of services in "squatter" areas allows those who can offer even limited access to land and services to occupy positions of considerable local power. In Natal, many shacklords began their "careers" as leaders of land invasions. Once established, a shacklord's power-base is reinforced both by force and by the strong dependence on the shacklord that develops within the community.

Much of the violence in the informal settlements of Natal has its basis in the struggle between traditional authority and other forms of political organisation (Kitchin, 1989). Shacklords have adopted particularly direct methods in this struggle, using vigilantes, attacks and recruitment drives to consolidate and protect their organisational bases. Most Natal shacklords have been co-opted by wider political interests, and in some instances have been used as clients of the central state to police and control informal settlements in the region. In other cases, shacklords who have emerged as particularly powerful local leaders have been drawn into alliances with Inkatha (Kentridge, 1990).

Crossroads, Cape Town

In late 1985 and 1986, Crossroads was racked by a violent conflict between the "witdoeke" and "comrades", which left hundreds dead and thousands homeless. Underlying the "war" were factors more complex than the "black-on-black" violence trumpeted in much of the media. Rather, the conflict was a struggle for political control in the local "squatter" areas, involving the broader "democratic" movement, the state and the personal ambitions of a local "strongman" (Cole, 1987). The disparaging physical conditions and general tenurial insecurity of the camps formed the fundamental backdrop against which the conflict unravelled.

The residents of Crossroads existed in physically harsh, materially deprived and generally insecure circumstances. These conditions allowed Johnson Ngxobongwana to rise to the position of local patron and strongman in Crossroads, exchanging limited tenure, services and "protection" for political support, and operating a militant gang. In the early 1980s, the strongest of three committees which controlled the area fell into the hands of Ngxobongwana, who expanded his control with an authoritarian style of leadership.

Attempts were made after 1982 to draw Crossroads into broader "progressive" community politics through the formation of a civic association. Initially, Ngxobongwana was co-opted into the local "progressive" structures and enjoyed a comfortable and mutually beneficial alliance with the "progressive" organisations. Soon, however, the actions of "progressive" youth organisations began to threaten Ngxobongwana's political standing and his ability to exchange patronage for material contributions from the community.

In the ensuing war, a new alliance developed between the state and Ngxobongwana. For Ngxobongwana, this connection represented a source of support which could be used to maintain his control in the area. For the state, the tacit and often direct support they extended to Ngxobongwana and the witdoeke was part of a strategy to shatter local "progressive" organisations and displace "illegal squatters" from satellite camps and KTC. As such, the Crossroads war represented a complex mix of marginalised and insecure "squatter" communities, the forms of leadership which emerge under such conditions, wider political organisations and the state.

Hout Bay, Cape Town

Several small agglomerations of informal housing exist in Hout Bay (Urbanisation Unit, 1990), many of which have been there for several years. In late 1990, however, a settlement developed on the dunes next to Hout Bay's main bathing beach and in close proximity to costly residential properties (valued around R300 000). Given Hout Bay's status as a national and international tourist resort, the settlement on the dunes, which housed approximately 1 600 people, attracted a great deal of media attention.

While opinions varied, many local residents were angrily opposed to the shack settlement. Some argued that property values would be eroded, while others maintained that the shack community posed an environmental and security threat, and was aggressive. Yet residents' perceptions were divergent, and internal conflicts emerged between the existing white ratepayers' association and the newly formed Property Rights Association, who urged a more hard-line approach to the settlement.

The shack settlers, in turn, found representation on an action committee established by the Cape Provincial Administration and local property owners. The committee, chaired by the DP's Colin Eglon, was originally established to defuse tensions between local residents and the "squatters", later concentrating on finding an alternative site for permanent settlement.

In December 1990, a fire destroyed the Sea Product "squatter" camp. In the same month, the Cape Supreme Court upheld the right of the local property owners to immediately evict the "squatters" from their land, although a temporary reprieve was granted by the owners until 28 February 1991. An alternative site for the "squatters" has subsequently been purchased and about 400 plots prepared (Urbanisation Unit, 1990).

Midrand, PWV

The illegal occupation of various portions of land in Midrand represents one of the first instances of "squatters" occupying prime property in the heart of a "white" area, and raised vociferous opposition in mid-1990 (Urbanisation Unit, 1990). Two settlements in particular, the so-called Snake Park "squatters" and a camp alongside Second Road, Midrand, were originally the focus of attention.

After seeking legal representation, these communities (housing around 1 000 people) secured a reprieve from Council evictions, pending lawful grounds for ejection. The Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA) responded by demarcating some 800ha of land adjacent to Midrand's upmarket white suburb of President Park, for a site-and-service scheme on which "squatters" from Midrand, Sandton, Alexandra and Tembisa could be resettled. "Kaalfontein" overshadowed the already strong public opposition to the presence of "squatters" and steered local residents' anger toward the authorities.

A Midrand Action Committee was formed and calls resounded for the resignation of the Midrand Management Committee. The Action Committee condemned Kaalfontein, claiming that the environmental impact had not been considered, that soil conditions were unsuitable, that the TPA had insufficient funds to provide basic services, and that inadequate water and sewage facilities were proposed. Vociferous opposition was also aired by residents who were concerned that the scheme would pose health and security threats and would lower their property values (Urbanisation Unit, 1990).

Both the Second Road and the Snake Park settlements were demolished and many people relocated at Ivory Park, the first developed portion of Kaalfontein. As the 300 sites were soon occupied, however, the remaining people from the Second Road Camp joined other evicted shackdwellers on the vacant landholding of a prominent developer. This community saw their homes demolished 10 times in a period of seven weeks and were forced to and from different sites. After several demolitions, rebuilding and court action, the developers were awarded legal permission in September 1990 to evict the shackdwellers.

Phola Park, Tokoza

Through 1990, Phola Park "squatter" camp in Tokoza township was sporadically racked by violence. Early in December, however, violent conflict in and around Phola Park escalated considerably. A central component of the violence was the repeated attacks and counter-attacks between the predominantly Xhosa "squatters" and the Zulu hostel dwellers in Tokoza. The conflict was clearly wrapped within the wider conflicts between the ANC and Inkatha on the Reef. Certainly the hostels were Inkatha strongholds while Phola Park had become ANC territory.

The Phola Park conflict epitomises the violence involving "squatter" camps and hostels around many Reef townships. Similar incidents have affected the camps of Zonki'izwe (Tokoza), Crossroads (Katlhong), Spooktown (Bekkersdal) and most recently Swanieville (Kagiso). In Swanieville on 12 May 1991, against the backdrop of accusations of ongoing conflict between the hostel and "squatters", a surprise attack was launched by hostel dwellers against Swanieville during which 28 people were killed.

Mandela Park/Holomisa Camp, Katlehong

Tensions between the Mandela Park and Holomisa Camp "squatter" settlements outside Katlehong erupted in a three-day battle in early April, 1991. More than 200 shacks were razed by fire, hundreds of "squatters" abandoned the area, and 15 people were killed during violent attacks and counter-attacks between the camps.

The fighting between the settlements had roots in the broader political processes operating on the Reef and in the physical circumstances of the camps. While both Mandela Park and Holomisa Camp were ANC strongholds, some residents indicated that the fighting concerned the presence of a small group of Inkatha supporters in Mandela Park. Others suggested, however, that the battle was prompted by jealousies over the presence of toilets in Mandela Park, while Holomisa Camp had no sanitation facilities.

LAND AND LAND INVASIONS

An overt source of conflict around informal settlement is the phenomenon of land invasion (see Glossary on page 35). Land invasions are by no means new and featured in Johannesburg as early as the 1940s (Bonner, 1989). The substantial press coverage of land invasions in 1990 and 1991 is an indication of the emotive nature of this form of conflict. Whereas in the past most free-standing informal settlements developed in an *ad hoc* and essentially incremental way with only a limited incidence of invasions, large, planned and rapid land invasions are now becoming more common. Recent examples include Mangaung, Thabong, Meloding and Tumahole in the Orange Free State and Wattville and Ikageng in the PWV (Urbanisation Unit, 1990). Civic structures (including Omhle) have sometimes led land invasions, but in some instances these have been orchestrated by local "strongmen", as in Tembisa and Daveyton on the PWV.

For the most part, land invasions have taken place on public land (usually buffer strips) as was the case in Tembisa, Wattville, Soshanguve, Ikageng and Daveyton on the PWV, and in many areas in the OFS including Mangaung and Tumahole. Private land has, however, not been free from invasions, as was the case in Thabong and Meloding in the OFS, in Durban, and in Midrand in the PWV.

OVERVIEW

In summary, it is important to reinforce four points regarding the politics of informal settlement:

- **A central feature is the general powerlessness and vulnerability of those who have had to adopt informal routes to urban housing.** They are often excluded from formal political and social structures and their interests are generally not well represented if at all.
- Some organisations and individuals are willing to adopt the cause of sections of

the informally-housed population. Outcomes differ, however, and some forms of patronage (e.g. shacklordism) are not necessarily in the longer-term interest of the recipients.

- Individual and community efforts to erect housing and to manage informal residential environments are often remarkably effective, but they can be limited by wider constraints, including insecurity and violence, and hostility from the authorities.
- **The phenomenon of informal settlement is riven by multiple sources of potential and real conflict.** The rapid growth and wider distribution of informal housing is, not surprisingly, precipitating further conflicts. It is crucial therefore that the political context of informal settlement be considered and mechanisms for conflict resolution investigated.

Tension and conflict has run through most aspects of life in informal settlements, including between established factions within the camps. Mechanisms for resolving such conflicts are urgently required. There are many examples, however, of creative and positive responses by communities, even in the face of poor living conditions and the threat of removals. It must be acknowledged that in the face of considerable opposition, informal dwellers have succeeded in creating and mobilising their own resources.

Conflict and the desperate housing situation in South Africa are also reflected in the recent spate of forced removals and land invasions. The violence, bitterness and harm to people and property that have accompanied demolitions and forced relocations, can scarcely be afforded in a country in the midst of a fragile reconciliation process. Moreover, **land invasions, while still infrequent, are a dramatic illustration of policy and administrative failure and a portent of things to come if the situation is not addressed rapidly and effectively.**

Section Endnotes

1. See *inter alia* Sowetan (16 November 1982), Star (31 January 1983), Rand Daily Mail (10 February 1983).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Dedensification	:	The process of reducing the number of dwellings in particularly dense settlements in order to allow for the provision of services
Land invasion	:	The organised or spontaneous invasion and occupation of land by people not specifically permitted to do so by authorities or property owners.
Patronage	:	The dispensing of resources to communities in desperate need in exchange for political support or monetary favours. Patronage can occur at both local and national levels.
Shacklords	:	A militaristic form of patronage whereby a patron creates a private army and uses force to maintain control over a community. Arduous taxes for land, services and 'protection' are usually extracted from the community. Also called warlords or strongmen.

SECTION FOUR : INFORMAL HOUSING - THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION

Informal housing is a worldwide phenomenon, and in many countries of the developing world it is both the dominant housing delivery process and the most common residential context for urban households (see Table 6 on page 38). An extreme case is Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, where nine out of ten residents live in "slums" and "squatter areas" (see Table 6). Against this background, the international array of informal housing types and residential arrangements is striking in its variety (Leeds, 1981), including cases which are similar in many respects to the four categories of informal housing common in South African cities. The "Third World" housing literature that has emerged since the 1960s has documented numerous examples of free-standing informal settlement in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Forms of backyard shacking and outbuilding conversion appear to be common in Africa and Latin America (Leeds, 1981), but for the most part these have attracted less academic scrutiny.

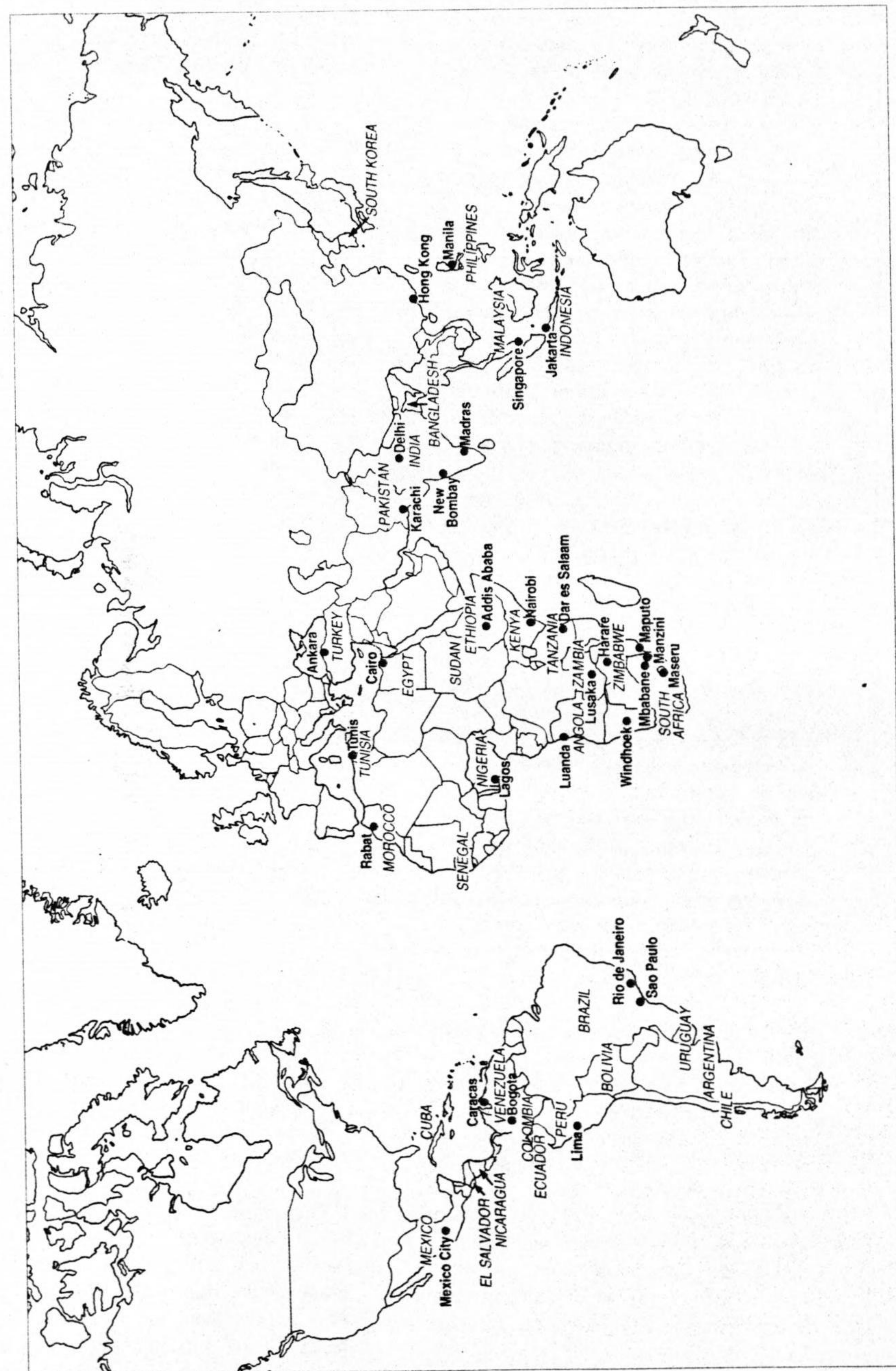
Over the past five years, the Urban Foundation has undertaken a review of the informal housing experience in diverse national contexts, including countries in Latin America (Brazil, Colombia, Cuba and Mexico), Asia (Hong Kong, India, Singapore, South Korea and Malaysia), and Africa (Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Zambia) (see Map 7 on page 37). Cross-national comparison of informal housing policy and practice must of course be informed by an awareness of country-specific contextual factors such as demography, economic systems and the relative centralisation or decentralisation of political decision-making. Against this

background, a striking finding that emerges from the Urban Foundation research is that there is considerable international convergence around informal housing policy, cutting across national differences. In essence, there is a growing pragmatism stemming from the realisation that few developing countries can rely solely on formal housing provision to eliminate the vast housing shortages that exist (van Vliet, 1990). In response, there is an **emerging trend for governments to accept the presence of informal housing, and to provide various forms of facilitation for the process.** Governments increasingly see informal housing "less as a problem and more as a solution that they actively seek to support" (van Vliet, 1990, p.42).

The focus of international policy debate around informal housing has thus moved away from arguments for and against informal housing. Instead, informal settlements are increasingly accepted as permanent and vital features of cities in developing countries. The new thrust of discussion is directed to specific aspects of informal settlements: for example, the role of informal housing in broader housing policy; the relative contribution of the public, private and popular sectors to informal housing processes; and ways of securing the participation and development of informal homebuilders, together with the progressive **consolidation** of informal residential areas. Opinion is still divided on many of these points, but direction can be sought in circumstances where informal settlement strategies and programmes have succeeded.

The discussion that follows pursues two broad themes:

- **Change in policy:** in which the move to housing policies incorporating informal housing elements such as site-and-service and "in-situ" upgrading is examined.



Map 7: Major Countries and Cities of the Developing World Mentioned in the Document

TABLE 6: ESTIMATES OF THE PROPORTION OF POPULATION IN "SLUMS" AND "SQUATTER AREAS" IN SELECTED CITIES, 1980

Country	City	Population in "Slums" and "Squatter Areas"
Africa:		
Egypt	Cairo	50%
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	85%
Tanzania	Dar es Salaam	60%
Angola	Luanda	70%
Zambia	Lusaka	50%
Tunisia	Tunis	45%
Kenya	Nairobi	33%
Asia:		
India	Bombay	45%
India	Delhi	50%
Philippines	Manila	40%
Pakistan	Karachi	37%
Turkey	Ankara	51%
Latin America:		
Brazil	Sao Paulo	32%
Mexico	Mexico City	40%
Peru	Lima	33%
Colombia	Bogota	59%
Venezuela	Caracas	34%

Source: After Habitat (1987) and Oberai (1989).

■ **Consolidation:** in terms of which factors demonstrated to influence the progress of incremental residential development in supported informal housing schemes are examined.

A survey of the lessons to be learned from the international experience concludes Section Four.

CHANGE IN POLICY

International experience shows that apart from the common response of total neglect, there have been two major policy reactions to informal housing (Bernstein, 1989). The first has entailed the widespread and sometimes brutal **demolition of shacks**. Demolition has been particularly favoured by authoritarian regimes, often with the objective of crushing populist political opposition in the informal areas (for example removals undertaken by

military regimes in Argentina, Brazil and Chile (Handelman, 1988; Leeds, 1988)). "Squatter" removal programmes were common worldwide from the 1950s onward, with examples in Africa (Nigeria, Tanzania, Senegal) Asia (South Korea, Philippines, India) and Latin America (Brazil, Chile, Venezuela) (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989). Some removals have been accompanied by the limited provision of public housing (such as the Venezuelan "superbloques"), but many others have simply left victims with little option but to make new informal arrangements.

The second, and more recent policy reaction has been to seek to **harness informal housing processes** in an effort to house as many people as possible. In general terms, the vehicles adopted have been the provision of new housing through variants of the site-and-service model, and the rehabilitation of existing informal housing via processes of "in-

THE FAILURE OF FORCED REMOVALS

Favela Removals in Rio de Janeiro, 1960s and 1970s

These are perhaps the best documented and most widely criticised instances of attempts to remove people from informal housing circumstances, in this instance to be relocated in mass-built housing (Leeds, 1988). The removals were, however, quite typical of government responses to informal settlements elsewhere in South America (e.g. Colombia and Argentina).

The Brazilian government established a National Housing Bank in 1964, the year of the military takeover. Utilising the Bank's funds, the State Housing Agency at the time (COHAB), began removing people from the *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro to mass housing schemes on the urban periphery, sometimes 100km from the city. Between 1962 and 1974, an estimated 140 000 people were removed from 80 *favelas*, although some 250 to 300 *favelas* remained.

Overall, the removals did not succeed in reducing the number of people occupying *favelas*. In the period 1970-1974, for example, the number of *favelas* increased in all but three of 24 administrative units, while the *favela* population grew by almost 50%. Amongst other factors, the mass housing programme had failed to provide sufficient and appropriate housing alternatives for people removed from *favelas*. Importantly, removals resulted in the severe social and economic disintegration of *favela* communities, who now faced long commuting distances (sometimes 4-5 hours a day), which were costly for household incomes and family cohesion (Perlman, 1976).

Removals in Zimbabwe

Hostility to informal housing is not confined to militarist right-wing regimes in South America (Rogerson, 1989b). Zimbabwe's post-independence government under Robert Mugabe, with a clear leftist orientation, exhibited hostility to informal housing in the early years of its rule. Among the first actions of the new government was to bulldoze settlements such as Chirambahuyo and to encourage "squatters" to "return" to the rural areas (Patel, 1988a). However, like shack settlements throughout the developing world, most of Zimbabwe's urban informal settlement population is not of rural origins. The majority are, in fact, second or third generation urban dwellers.

There is some evidence of a shift in government thinking, albeit a grudging change. Recently, the State has committed itself to a programme of upgrading a shack settlement at Epworth, a community consisting of "people from previous settlements which the government has been chasing around the city" (Patel, 1988b, p.211). Recent purges against spontaneous settlements around Harare have, however, tempered hopes that Zimbabwe's attitude to shack settlements has become more realistic (Rogerson, 1989b).

situ" upgrading. The 1960s and 1970s saw widespread (and perhaps overoptimistic) experimentation with site-and-service and upgrading in many countries, for example Kenya, Zambia, India, Morocco, Egypt, Bolivia and the Philippines (Palmer and Patton, 1988).

In recent years, the initial enthusiasm has been replaced by a more sober approach which recognises and seeks to overcome the shortcomings of these housing strategies (Palmer and Patton, 1988).

The Early Emphasis on Removals

With rapid urbanisation and the spectacular growth of informally housed populations from the 1950s onwards, many governments in developing countries reacted to shack settlements and their occupants with consternation and overt hostility. **For reasons that were fundamentally political, but which were often couched in other terms** (such as "urban redevelopment" and "beautification" (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989)) **such settlements were frequently treated as a "blight" that had to be removed.** Thus an international wave of forced "squatter" and slum removals dispossessed thousands of their housing. Major clearance programmes took place in Venezuela, Nigeria and the Philippines in the 1950s, in Brazil, Tanzania, India and Senegal in the 1960s and 1970s, and in South Korea and Zimbabwe in the 1980s (Palmer and Patton, 1988; Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1989; Leeds 1988).

By their very nature, removals have been disruptive and confrontational. Worse, the trauma has in many cases been futile, as removed communities have re-established informal settlements on the removal site, or on land elsewhere in the same urban area. The form and effect of the notorious *favela* removals in Rio de Janeiro and the more recent removals in Zimbabwe illustrate the disruptive impact, misdirection and general futility of this strategy (see box on removals on page 39).

Forced relocations have not always been linked to the provision of alternative housing, but many clearance programmes in the 1960s and 1970s were associated with public housing initiatives (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989), such as those in Venezuela and Brazil, and post-independence Kenya and Zambia. Whether as a means to rehouse removed informal settlers, or as a strategy to provide new housing for the urban poor, **public housing programmes in developing countries**

have had a very poor record of performance (with some unique exceptions, such as Singapore). This failure has become evident in a number of ways:

- in most instances, **no more than a few "model" estates were built before governments had to channel funding into other priority areas, or simply ran out of money.** Among others, this situation occurred in Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya, the Philippines, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989);
- **public housing schemes were seldom occupied by the community at which they were ostensibly targeted,** namely, the urban poor. One of many examples is La Unidad, an estate housing some 10 000 people in Mexico City. The scheme was ostensibly built for the poor, but its present occupants are predominantly middle- and upper-class (Handelman, 1988);
- **public housing estates have generally proved to be far too expensive for the urban poor,** substantial subsidies notwithstanding. For example, the World Bank found that many residents in Cairo, Manila and Rabat could not afford to live in highly subsidised public housing (Linn, 1979);
- **as a consequence, in many developing countries it has been the new "post-independence" middle classes who have occupied and benefitted from public housing schemes,** as is the case in Nigeria and Bangladesh (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989).

In Cuba, "years of the single minded pursuit of state-built industrialised new construction have given way to a mixture of prefabrication and traditional technologies, state building along with individual and collective self-help, and new construction

together with rehabilitation" (Hamberg, 1990, p. 380). **The Cuban government remains committed to state involvement in housing, but the new pragmatic housing policy introduced in 1984 finally recognised the inability of the government housing programme to match housing need.** In reality, self building was the source of the majority of new housing units, even at the height of the state housing campaign. Throughout the post-revolutionary period 1959-1988, government housing accounted for some 34% of the units constructed, and self-built housing for the remainder (Hamberg, 1990).

In general, public housing in developing countries has failed to deal with the scale of housing required. In addition this housing has tended to exclude the poor (for reasons of cost and political patronage). In short, in the majority of cases where this option has been tried, public housing programmes have failed to address the housing crisis. The juxtaposition of informal settlement removal and public housing provision is thus singularly unfortunate: the one strategy destroys housing and ravages communities; and the other promises much, but can only deliver limited housing and restricted access to a scarce resource.

Removals persist in many countries, but they have become increasingly discredited as a tool of housing policy.

Benign neglect or bewildered inaction are passive policy roles that have been adopted instead, but the social and economic costs of continued illegal and unregulated urban sprawl have added impetus to new approaches incorporating supported and legal informal settlement.

Shift to Site-and-Service and Upgrading

The inability of the governments of most developing countries to reverse the tide of informal housing has led to an international review of the negative policies that were pursued most vigorously in the 1950s and 1960s. Encouraged by agencies such as the

World Bank¹ (Lee-Smith and Memon, 1988), many governments turned their attention to site-and-service schemes and to the "in-situ" upgrading of informal housing. There was considerable optimism in the 1970s that "self-help" in site-and-service schemes would provide an answer to the shelter crisis in the developing world (Palmer and Patton, 1988). In retrospect, the site-and-service process has shown considerable promise, although there has been mixed success. While some schemes (such as the DBB project in Manila) have been highly successful, the achievements of others (such as in Vashi, New Bombay) have been diluted by several problems (see box on site-and-service schemes on page 42). Indeed, **evaluations of site-and-service schemes established in various parts of the world highlight several common difficulties:**

- There has been widespread **disappointment** concerning the slow rate of consolidation in many site-and-service schemes.
- International experience reveals that there are factors (the provision of secure tenure, access to small loans for home improvement, and the degree of community mobilization) which are central to the success of **consolidation** in site-and-service schemes, but which are not always present.
- Although site-and-service schemes have in general proved to be **more accessible** for the poor than public housing, they have nonetheless been criticized for being unaffordable for significant segments of the urban poor (Peattie, 1982).
- There has been substantial evidence of **'down-market raiding'**, a situation when land intended for the urban poor is occupied by people of a higher income group. The result is that often only a small proportion of sites are occupied by the income groups for whom they were initially intended.

SITE-AND-SERVICE SCHEMES : MIXED SUCCESS

Dasmarinas Bagong Bayan, Manila

In 1981, the population of Metropolitan Manila was approximately 7 million, 40% of which was informally housed. The Dasmarinas Bagong Bayan (DBB) site-and-service scheme was planned to accommodate "squatters" dislocated through upgrading projects in Manila (Swan, Wegelin and Panchee, 1983). The area was planned as an integrated settlement, with factories, a commercial centre, schools, a hospital, and other social facilities. The 652ha site could house 6 000 families, and was highly accessible to Metropolitan Manila and other municipalities.

The DBB project was administered by the National Housing Authority (NHA). The development included walkways and roads, wells and water tanks, a drainage and sanitation system, street lights and a rudimentary electricity supply. A range of site sizes was provided in the scheme, and various core housing options were introduced. Housing materials were supplied through the Housing Materials Loans Programmes and a building supply store for self-help construction.

The plots were made available for leasehold with an option to purchase, either through outright payment or through amortisation over 30 years. The project was substantially subsidised by the authorities and plots were cross-subsidised by the sale of commercial/industrial sites.

Overall, the DBB project has shown considerable success in reaching its target group of very low income families. It has also provided for balanced community development and the ongoing improvement of the settlement.

Vashi, New Bombay

Vashi was the first residential module planned in New Bombay - a city designed to diffuse the congestion of Bombay (Swan, Wegelin and Panchee, 1983). It was anticipated that around 60% of Vashi's population would be drawn from the lowest income groups, and a site-and-service scheme was planned to accommodate them. In order to make land available for this scheme, it was decided to cross-subsidise the land cost by selling plots in the private housing market at a profit to allow the remaining plots to be sold below market rates.

The site-and-service scheme was planned close to physical and existing social infrastructure, and as an integral part of the residential fabric of Vashi. The scheme includes a bus transportation network, pedestrian walkways, individual water connections, stormwater drainage, garbage collection, individual toilets on each plot and 4 core housing options. Provisions for health, educational, sports and religious facilities have also been made.

Plots were made available to participants on a 60-year lease, either through a loan or as an outright payment. No restriction was placed on sub-letting, and many residents have financed their housing extension through such income. Under the loan scheme, occupants pay one-third of the unit cost as a down-payment and the remaining two-thirds is covered by a loan from the central government housing agency.

Despite the general success achieved in this project, a high level of displacement was registered. About 75% of houses in the project area were resold as low income households faced prohibitively high monthly costs, particularly for property taxes, water and electricity. Transport costs for those who still worked in Bombay were also high. Moreover, the project did not adequately deal with employment generation for participants.

- Because most site-and-service schemes require that regular payments be made both to redeem capital costs as well as to meet service charges, the schemes have tended to **exclude** those who do not earn regular incomes.
- The affordability problem is further exacerbated by the fact that, because of high metropolitan land prices, site-and-service schemes are often located in **remote locales** on the urban periphery, thereby imposing substantial transport costs on residents.

Criticisms of site-and-service schemes must, however, be seen in perspective. Many of the difficulties can be resolved by placing site-and-service in the context of a broader housing strategy, and by actively pursuing ways to ensure a policy context in which the site-and-service option is affordable and all forms of support are fully mobilised. Down-market raiding (see Glossary on page 53), for example, is often attributable to the fact that other market niches are being neglected, or are underdeveloped. With reference to affordability and support, there are now growing calls for appropriate subsidisation and the facilitation of broad private sector

involvement (Palmer and Patton, 1988; Lee-Smith and Memon, 1988).

Alongside site-and-service, "in-situ" upgrading (see Glossary on page 53) **is winning increasing international support as a key element of national housing policy in developing countries.** Following the site-and-service advocacy of the 1970s, the World Bank shifted its funding emphasis toward the upgrading of existing informal and slum housing, and many subsequent Bank projects combine site-and-service and upgrading initiatives (Palmer and Patton, 1988). Numerous countries throughout the developing world have adopted upgrading programmes, and at least two (Indonesia and Tanzania) have national upgrading programmes (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989). Unlike site-and-service, upgrading does not produce new units of shelter. It is simply a process where conditions in existing residential areas are improved with limited displacement and disruption of the community.

In Africa, early impetus for "in-situ" upgrading was provided by the reported success of the massive Lusaka upgrade in Zambia (Bamberger, Sanyal and Valverde, 1982) (see box on upgrading below). The

THE POSITIVE RECORD OF "IN-SITU" UPGRADING

Africa : The Lusaka Experience

In Lusaka, post-independence housing policy based on standards set in the colonial era failed to address the shelter needs of the urban poor. They did not have access to public housing and lived around the fringes of Lusaka in illegal, unsafe and unserviced shanty compounds (Bamberger, Sanyal and Valverde, 1982). The Lusaka Upgrading Project was therefore developed, combining site-and-service with "in-situ" upgrading, and aimed at relaxing official housing standards, while improving the housing conditions of nearly 40% of the city's population.

The combination of "in-situ" upgrading with the development of adjoining site-and-service projects had two advantages. Families whose houses were demolished to allow improvement to the settlement's layout received an alternative site close by, while households could choose the level of services for which they were prepared to pay.

There were several positive features about the Lusaka upgrading project. It was effectively administered and implemented through the relatively smooth-functioning, semi-autonomous Housing Planning Unit within the Lusaka City Council. There were significant levels of community participation (despite political difficulties), and consequently almost no resistance to the necessary relocation. Overall, the project succeeded in providing sites and shelter specifically for the poor, and improving the living conditions of 63% of Lusaka's "squatter" community.

South America : The Codesco Project in Rio de Janeiro

In an attempt to find an alternative to the forced removals of the favelas in Brazil, an experimental state agency CODESCO was established in 1968 (Leeds, 1988). The agency supported "in-situ" upgrading as opposed to removal, and set about regularizing tenure; improving access, providing public lighting, water and sanitation systems; minimally supervising and financing the rebuilding of houses; and administering the sale of land which had been expropriated by the state.

The project was favourably received by its beneficiaries. The upgrading was effected with minimum disruption of the existing settlement and the services delivered proved to be affordable. Moreover, the cost of building a house in the CODESCO project was half of that of a house in the mass housing scheme at the urban periphery. Substantial progress was also made in improving existing housing stock. Unfortunately, the CODESCO project did not have the political support it required, and the agency was disbanded after a short period.

Asia : The Kampung Improvement Programme, Jakarta

Jakarta - a large, fast growing, and under-serviced city with low-paid and insecure jobs - typifies the pattern of urban growth experienced by other developing countries (Patton and Subanu, 1988). Two thirds of the urban population live in the over-crowded central or higher-income peripheral informal settlements, called Kampung.

The government established a nationwide Kampung Improvement Programme (KIP), evolving as a low standard programme of road and walkway construction, drainage improvement, water provision and the construction of school and health facilities. By 1980, KIP benefited an estimated 3.5 million people in Jakarta alone, and was the largest settlement improvement effort in Asia, extending to some 200 towns and cities in the country.

KIP policy emphasizes speed and equality of treatment for all low income settlements. It is intended to be a systematic and unified physical, social and economic development project that operates at the national, provincial and city levels of government. Objectives of the KIP include increasing incomes and productivity, facilitating household access to capital assets and credit, reducing socio-economic vulnerability, and promoting self-help and self-reliance.

Overall, KIP has illustrated potential to improve the lives of more Indonesians at a lower cost and greater economic return than other options. Over the last 5-year national plan, while 84 000 persons benefited from site-and-service programmes, 500 000 low income residents were assisted by the KIP, and this at a markedly lower cost (\$40 per capita as against \$225). Major savings accrued from servicing high density settlements, and improving existing services rather than providing new services.

World Bank, which supported the project, concluded at the time that upgrading in Lusaka **made a much larger contribution to the satisfaction of basic needs for infrastructure, services and shelter than all the other housing strategies combined.** This is not to suggest, however, that the upgrading project proceeded without problems. One of the most important of these was poor cost recovery (Bamberger, Sanyal and Valverde, 1982). In the 1980s, the acceptance of upgrading spread to Kenya and more recently to Zimbabwe (Rogerson, 1989b).

In general, the international experience suggests that **"in-situ" upgrading is able to assist people lower down the income spectrum than site-and-service schemes** (Angel, 1983) because

- unusually high housing densities can be achieved (which reduce per unit servicing costs);
- there are savings in land costs (new land does not necessarily need to be purchased);
- savings derive from local community mobilization in service installation and operation;
- spontaneous informal settlements tend to be reasonably well-located with respect to work and consumption opportunities and transport costs for residents are often much lower than in peripheral site-and-service schemes.

While the international experience of "in-situ" upgrading is more limited than site-and-service projects, it would appear that upgrading has a great deal of potential to meet the shelter needs of the urban poor (the results of such projects in Africa, South America and Asia are encouraging; see box on upgrading on page 43).

However, some of the common difficulties facing in-situ upgrading must be noted

(Kayila, 1986; Palmer and Patton, 1988)

- relocation may be necessary in densely settled areas;
- securing tenure may be difficult and complex;
- upgrading is difficult in some localities;
- essential community participation may be obstructed by government opposition to local mobilisation.

There are obviously many lessons to be learned, but **site-and-service schemes and "in-situ" upgrading are gaining international acceptance as the most positive and pragmatic way to ensure that urban populations in developing countries have real access to safe and affordable housing without the stigma and insecurity of illegal "squatting".**

CONSOLIDATION

It might be argued by critics of site-and-service and "in-situ" upgrading that these approaches to housing delivery condemn participants to live in shacks forever. At best such a criticism is only partially valid, since **international experience has shown that "squatter" enclaves in many cities have in fact been transformed over time, often to become virtually indistinguishable from neighbourhoods with formal housing** (one example being the *Sector Popular* in Mexico City) (Ward, 1982; Payne, 1984). The key policy issue is how to ensure that this upgrading takes place. This issue should be a major focus of attention and criticism if necessary.

The process of transformation has been termed **consolidation** (see Glossary on page 53), and in the "squatter" context it refers to the acquisition of legal tenure, the incremental replacement of shacks by more permanent dwellings constructed with orthodox materials, the installation and improvement of services, and the establishment of social and commercial facilities. It includes the decriminalisation of "squatter" communities, and their

PARTICIPATION IN THE "IN-SITU" UPGRADING OF OLALEYE-IPONRI

In Nigeria, a highly successful "in-situ" upgrading project was undertaken in Olaleye-Iponri, an inner city settlement of Lagos (Makinwa-Adebusoye, 1986). The 20 000 strong population participated widely in the project, contributing money, labour and materials, and demonstrated considerable enthusiasm for the upgrading scheme. Residents' support is readily explained by the fact that all community leaders were fully involved in the development of policy guidelines and a programme of action for the project.

Grass roots participation was also encouraged through the formation of community development associations at neighbourhood levels. The community has real decision-making power; objections raised by community representatives resulted in the shifting of the site of a proposed market.

An understanding of the residents needs and affordability - based on surveys and participation - indicated that the removal of residents from the site and the total redevelopment of the area would have resulted in the evacuation of existing residents who could not afford the price of newly developed sites. The consequent decision to upgrade in-situ, attracted large scale support for the project.

Landowners were included in the entire planning process and, as a result of their inclusion and their understanding of the project intentions and obstacles, some owners agreed to exchanging their land - which could be used for clinics etc. - for alternative land elsewhere in Lagos.

The meaning of project interventions for residents and landowners was explained through lectures, filmshows and consultative meetings. Furthermore, the various planning sub-committees responsible for project activities included, as members, the residents who would benefit from the inputs. For example, a market committee included on its membership the market women who would be allocated stalls when the proposed market was built.

This participative planning approach has had a dramatic influence on community development. Residents have taken responsibility for project interventions and have a sense of ownership over their upgraded environment. They have taken initiative in rebuilding their homes, cleaning and beautifying their neighbourhood and establishing security groups who maintain a nightwatch so that infrastructure such as drains are not damaged or polluted.

incorporation into the political and social structures of the city. Since consolidation is at the core of many site-and-service schemes and "in-situ" upgrading initiatives worldwide, **it must be noted that these strategies are explicitly designed to help participants move beyond shacks, which are simply the first step in a process of incremental shelter upgrading.** Based on the international experience with other policy approaches, it is evident that the **failure** to embrace informal housing has

slowed or even reversed consolidation (by demolition or neglect, for example), and that this failure has been a key factor sustaining permanent shacking.

Consolidation research shows that the process is influenced by factors relating to the consolidators themselves, and to conditions in the broader socio-political and economic environment (Ward, 1982). Three of these factors are discussed here, drawing on the limited available international

literature. They are the **importance of community participation**; the **influence of politics**; and **constructive roles for government and other actors**.

The Importance of Community Participation

Popular participation is implicit in the informal housing process, but actions may range from the individual collection of building materials to large-scale organised land invasion. Accumulating international evidence suggests that **a crucial determinant of consolidation in site-and-service and "in-situ" upgrading initiatives in developing countries is the extent of community participation in the formulation, construction and management of projects**. Participation has been found to influence both the initial success of projects, and the sustained consolidation of both structures and communities.

Community participation (see Glossary on page 53) has two broad levels and two sets of benefits:

- At the first level, it facilitates the implementation of informal housing strategies by ensuring the legitimacy of project interventions, bringing about the closest possible fit between project design and implementation and the needs and expectations of participants, building local capacity for the ongoing management of the project, and sharing project costs via the mobilisation of community resources such as labour, money and local management (Bamberger, 1986; Paul, 1987).
- At the second level, it has the potential to transform communities by allowing access to decision-making, by facilitating organisation around issues of local concern, and by promoting political awareness (Marsden and Moser, 1990), and the potential to influence policy.

The emerging record of participation at the

first level is mixed but promising. For example, in the Kampung Improvement Programme developed in Indonesia in 1979, the contributions of residents, in terms of labour and funds, was so significant that it allowed the spread of the programme to be substantially expanded beyond planned targets. Importantly, the project design also proved appropriate, as residents enjoyed consistent representation and real decision-making power on planning committees (Patton and Subanu, 1988). In the World Bank sponsored Lusaka site-and-service programme, community participation ensured active and sustained collaboration among important actors despite the massive social and political disruption caused by project implementation (Bamberger, Sanyal and Valverde, 1982) (see the box on upgrading on page 43 for descriptions of the Kampung and Lusaka programmes). A full example of the process and importance of community participation emerges when the highly successful Olalaye-Iponri upgrading scheme in Nigeria is analyzed (see box on page 46).

In a move that puzzled the implementing agency (the World Bank), communities in Guayaquil, Ecuador rejected one upgrading initiative and accepted a second, despite the fact that the latter offered a lower level of services. The difference was found to stem from the fact that the first project had been imposed by the state on suspicious "beneficiaries", whilst in the second the participants had been able to make critical choices (Salmen, 1987).

The empowerment of communities implied at the second level of participation is less frequently pursued in informal housing projects, as is shown in a recent survey of World Bank initiatives in many parts of the world (Paul, 1987). Agencies and many governments may fear crossing the boundary between community self-help and political activity, especially when their interests diverge sharply from those expressed at a popular level. In these circumstances, there is a danger that

controls will turn community participation into compliance with a set of rules and regulations. This is the case with slum upgrading initiatives in Madras, where the government and local slumlords have blocked effective community involvement and participation. The consequence is that the project has failed, by admission of the implementing agency (Nientied, Ben Mhenni and de Wit, 1990).

It is clear that **whilst the different levels of community participation have various consolidation and community benefits, the realisation of the full spectrum of these benefits will be difficult in cases where strong interests are likely to resist the possibility of empowerment**. The World Bank has suggested that the facilitation of community action leading to empowerment is only viable when this objective is clearly supported in official policy (Paul, 1987).

The Influence of Politics

National and local politics exert a critical influence on the form and evolution of informal housing and settlement. In other words, informal settlement consolidation (in the broad sense) is closely linked to political circumstances at these levels. The previous sub-sections described the broad move toward the acceptance and positive mobilisation of informal housing processes in many parts of the developing world. This sub-section looks at national and local political environments and structures that have either blocked informal housing on the one hand, or have supported or tolerated it on the other.

National Politics

The most detailed research into national politics and informal settlement undertaken by the Urban Foundation has been that dealing with Latin America. This material is rich and multi-faceted, but for the purposes of this discussion a simple distinction will be made between political contexts in which informal

settlement has been either **included** or **excluded**:

- **The politics of exclusion:** In Latin America, hostility to informal settlement was particularly virulent under the authoritarian military regimes that emerged in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay in the 1960s and 1970s. These regimes sought to crush the growing support for populist movements that had emerged under prior democratic rule. Since these movements were rooted among the poor, the regimes sought in several cases to physically destroy "squatter" enclaves and inner-city slums (Handelman, 1988). Mass detentions and even bombing were used in Chile; the Brazilian military evicted informal settlers and razed settlements; and the regime in Uruguay withdrew protective legislation and demolished inner-city buildings occupied by the poor (Handelman, 1988).

The central characteristic of the four military governments was that they excluded and harassed the urban poor, compounding their vulnerability and forcing them to rely even more on popular strategies to acquire shelter. As a result, the "problem" was simply perpetuated (*favela* populations in Brazil **grew** in the face of removals) with an overlay of aggravated social disruption and alienation (Leeds, 1988).

- **The politics of inclusion:** The nature and extent of informal settlement "inclusion" has varied considerably over time and among countries. During the so-called democratic 1940s and 1950s, some Latin American governments promoted or simply tolerated informal settlements in a top-down paternalistic fashion. In most cases this strategy was followed by populist leaders who wished to gain the support of the urban poor (Leeds, 1988). The Odria administration in Peru (1948-56), for

example, provided untitled land and minimal urban services in exchange for party loyalty. The device of holding back title was a mechanism to maintain a dependent clientele, and this practice is still common in many Latin American countries today (Leeds, 1988).

Whilst clientism and patronage persist, it must be noted that Latin American populist regimes have given informal settlement qualified support, which is in stark contrast to the approach of the military dictatorships. It is also in the populist climate that site-and-service and upgrading have been encouraged as a matter of policy. Factors that appear to have influenced the extent of this support are the political muscle of the urban poor in various countries, and the extent to which the middle class has the power to compete for resources (Handelman, 1988).

Local Politics

Local organisation around housing in Latin America and elsewhere in the developing world has been complex and locally diverse. It has responded to national political structures and housing policies, and to regional and local socio-political factors. As new policies incorporating informal settlement processes take root and evolve in developing countries, so too will corresponding local political forms. However, many housing-related political structures and movements continue to reflect the failure of many societies to accept responsibility for the many poor and homeless people, and their inability or reluctance to devise practical and ambitious housing strategies that build on existing resources and spread housing opportunities to all sections of their population.

One such political phenomenon is discussed here: **patrons and shacklords**.

Patrons and shacklords: Clientism and patronage (see Glossary on page 53) are

widely associated with informal housing provision in Latin America and other parts of the developing world. Conditions conducive to patronage exist when individuals or groups can exert strong control over scarce resources such as land and services. Typically, they dispense these resources to people who are in desperate need, in exchange for political and/or monetary favours. Latin American politicians have often used their privileged positions to dispense patronage (Leeds, 1988), but the practice is by no means confined to that continent, or indeed to formal politics. Patrons might also be landowners, the de facto controllers of land and structures (for example slum "leaders" in Madras), professional power brokers (documented in Karachi (Nientied, Ben Mhenni and de Wit, 1990)), or drug dealers (for example in Rio de Janeiro (Leeds, 1988)).

Patronage relationships can in some circumstances support consolidation, but they are often by nature opposed to rapid and sustained development of people and settlements. For example, patrons have a vested interest in supplying resources in a gradual and conditional manner to maintain a dependent support base over time. Local organisations have in some cases sought to oppose patrons, but they often manipulate the relationship to win valued resources. In the settlement of Las Flores in Lima, factions of the community promoted clientelistic ties, whilst others confronted the patrons (Leeds, 1988).

A particularly militaristic manifestation of patronage is what is sometimes termed "**warlordism**". Since the term has specific connotations, it might be better to refer to "coercive shacklordism" in the context of informal settlement. In certain situations, such shacklords have utilised force and created private armies to gain further access to resources and to maintain authority (Dauskardt, 1991). These warlords impose various arduous taxes and fees on communities under their control, in return for land, limited services and "protection".

Coercive strongmen thrive under certain wider political circumstances. In essence, this wider context is usually the failure of democracy and the inability of the central state to assert itself peacefully and consistently over its area of jurisdiction.

Land Invasions

The incidence of land invasions varies markedly from one part of the developing world to another. In overview, **the most substantial land invasions have taken place in South America** (Mabin, 1989; Rogerson, 1989a). **Organised land invasions, as opposed to incremental "squatter" infiltration, are more rare in Asia, and in Africa are of only minor significance** (Rogerson, 1989a). Land invasions have been described as the most conspicuous **political** action of the urban masses in the cities of developing countries. In terms of the **supply** of housing to the urban poor, however, the role of land invasions has generally been of secondary importance. In the international experience, invasions have normally been focused on public land, rather than private property, and are usually highly organised rather than "spontaneous". Popular local organisations have sometimes spearheaded invasions, but national and local politicians have also organised the mass occupation of land in order to secure a popular base and political advantage. Overall, the incidence and importance of land invasions has been decreasing worldwide as the commercialised urban land market has expanded. In some instances where land invasions continue, however, they are organised by entrepreneurs who, in turn, are often well-connected to local politicians (Rogerson, 1989a).

With exceptions, land invasions throughout the world have tended to be led by long-term urban residents desperate to improve their living conditions. It is thus incorrect to associate invasions with new rural-urban migrants. Invasions are not undertaken lightly because of the risks involved, and the potential cost to poor people who cannot afford to waste

meagre financial resources. Against this background, it must be noted that **land invasions have generally taken place only in circumstances of last resort**, where systems of housing provision are grossly inadequate or in total collapse and alternative means of securing land for the urban poor are not available. **While the lack of alternatives is the key consideration in accounting for invasions, there is evidence that invasions are more likely when acute need is juxtaposed with "favourable" political circumstances.** Particularly important in this regard are conditions conducive to the formation of local political structures which can organise invasions. In Nicaragua, for example, the escalation of land invasions has been a conspicuous aspect of the post-revolutionary order. In general, a clear link is apparent between the incidence of land invasions and transition from repressive regimes to more democratic forms of government.

In Southern Africa, "squatter" infiltration of urban land has been far more prevalent than organised land invasions of the kind widely documented in Latin America. The infiltration process is widespread, and has been noted in Harare, Lusaka, Maseru, Maputo, Mbabane-Manzini and Windhoek (Rogerson, 1989a). As was noted earlier, the initial reaction of the post-independence government in Zimbabwe was one of hostility to "squatters". Recent actions are ambiguous, juxtaposing upgrading initiatives with "squatter" removals (Rogerson, 1989a).

The Third World housing literature documents numerous examples of consolidating "suburbs" that started as invasions (such as the Pampa de Comas invasion in Lima) (Ward, 1982; Leeds, 1988), **illustrating the point that "in-situ" upgrading is possible in these circumstances.** Indeed, upgrading is facilitated by the community cohesion that sometimes characterises groups involved in invasions (Leeds, 1988). However, it is also evident that invasions would be drastically reduced if quantities of affordable and

relatively well-situated "legal" land were available.

Constructive roles for Government and other actors

Despite changing attitudes to informal housing, developing countries have yet to make policy provision for this form of delivery as a continuous process operating at a national level (Payne, 1984; Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989). Site-and-service and upgrading are still experimental in many situations, and schemes are often targeted and unique in their formulation and implementation. As a result there are few comprehensive and holistic policy models to study. However, innovative initiatives in many parts of the developing world point to potentially constructive roles for diverse actors in informal housing. Many of these might underpin the policies that will emerge in the next decade.

Third World governments have to accept that inaction, repression or inappropriate policy have compounded housing problems in their countries. **New supportive roles adopted by governments have included** (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989):

- The **legalisation** of illegal informal settlements (in Lusaka, whole urban centres have been recognised). In Bangkok, this recognition was at the base of various land-sharing schemes negotiated by squatters and landowners, with non-government organisations and government agencies assisting.
- The adoption of **national upgrading programmes** where governments have committed themselves to upgrading on a national basis (such as those in Indonesia and Tanzania).
- The **reformulation of building codes** to avoid imposing unrealistically and unattainably high standards (at a

national level in Colombia and the Sudan).

- The **strengthening of local governments** through technical and financial support. The relatively recent municipal reforms in Colombia, for example, involved the establishment of an elected mayoral system and an improved fiscal base for local government.
- **Support for community groups** formed by lower income residents to assist them in providing an effective and coherent way of upgrading existing informal settlements and establishing new informal housing suburbs (in Mexico a national fund for such support has been created).
- **Support for non-government organisations** active in housing (large state-approved housing NGOs are active in El Salvador, Zambia and Mexico).
- **Support for informal finance organisations** (such as the FUNDASAL organisation in El Salvador).

It has been acknowledged that the key obstacle to major, sustained site-and-service housing provision is the scarcity of affordable, well situated land (Palmer and Patton, 1988, Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989). Few countries have institutionalised land acquisition for informal housing, but one exception is Tunisia. Here, land development agencies acquire, develop and sell land at cost for residential development. The programme is situated in a strong policy context, and there is a national political and financial commitment to housing the poor (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989).

Associated with government-led facilitative initiatives, there is also a **growing acceptance of the critical role played by other actors in informal housing delivery.**

Among these are community groups, NGOs, developers, building contractors, financial agencies, service organisations and materials suppliers. The question of appropriate roles for government, the private sector and communities is one which will have to be resolved in specific political and economic circumstances. An emerging middle line recognises the chronically limited financial and institutional capacity of governments in developing countries. Against this background, it sees the state mainly in a facilitative role, with a commitment to wider participation in the provision of housing, and the mobilisation of market forces. However, it is recognised that markets frequently exclude the poor, so an additional role for government is seen to be that of appropriate intervention (such as subsidisation) to rectify market inadequacies (Palmer and Patton, 1988; Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989).

OVERVIEW: LESSONS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Whilst it is folly to seek to transfer projects and housing-related initiatives from one country to another without reference to socio-political and cultural contexts, a number of substantial themes emerge from the recent housing experience of developing nations. Each of these is relevant to deliberations around housing policy in South Africa, but the extent to which lessons are taken depends in part on the willingness of policy-shapers to look seriously at the positive aspects of the international experience, and their determination not to repeat the mistakes. Before looking at positive considerations for the future, it is necessary to challenge some hardy clichés that still bedevil the housing debate in South Africa:

- **Informal housing and illegal invasions of land are a symptom of uncontrolled urban growth.** Rapid urbanisation is an undeniable fact throughout the Third World, but attributing these problems solely to demographic causes diverts attention from the failure of governments and societies to formulate serious and effective strategies to deal with the housing

problems of the majority of low income people.

- **Acceptance of informal housing as one housing delivery option is an abrogation of the responsibility of the state which condemns people to live in shacks forever.** Governments which have neglected informal settlements for various reasons (including the pursuit of unreachable formal housing objectives) can be accused of condemning people to shacks. In the right political context, and given the appropriate support, policies incorporating and promoting informal housing and progressive consolidation offer the realistic and widespread prospect of escaping permanent "shackdom".

On this foundation, the following observations drawn from the international experience are positive signposts for housing policy in South Africa:

- Successful housing policies for developing countries must be balanced and multi-faceted. Policies that have pursued a single "solution" have failed.
- Housing policies incorporating and supporting informal settlement offer a realistic and sustainable way to deal with the scale and nature of housing problems in the developing world.
- Site-and-service and "in-situ" upgrading are complementary elements of housing policies that incorporate informal housing, but they require determined, national political will and a commitment to partnership to survive.
- Innovation and boldness are required if managed informal settlement "experiments" are to be expanded to become national housing solutions.
- Community participation is essential to the sustained consolidation of informal housing. Effective community organisation is an essential component of a democratic system of checks and balances.

- Resource-starved communities are vulnerable to exploitation, and prone to desperate action. Access to affordable,

well located land will go some way to dealing with these problems.

Section Endnotes

1. As a major international development agency, the World Bank has been influential in the field of informal housing. For this reason, a great deal of the literature is sourced from the Bank. Reference to the Bank reflects these facts and does not imply that its views are given precedence nor accepted in full.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Community participation	:	Participation by a community in the development process. Ideally, participation occurs at all levels of decision-making in the process, from developing proposals through to implementation.
Consolidation	:	A process which involves the incremental physical, social and economic development and upgrading of an informal housing environment.
"Down-market raiding"	:	The purchase or occupation of housing intended for lower income people by a higher income group.
"In-situ" upgrading	:	The delivery of secure tenure and the required infrastructural services to ensure health and safety in existing informal settlements, and the promotion of the consolidation of such a settlement over time.
Patronage	:	The dispensing of resources to communities in desperate need in exchange for political support or monetary favours. Patronage can occur at both local and national levels.

SECTION FIVE: CONCLUDING REMARKS

REALISING THE POTENTIAL OF INFORMAL HOUSING

The last two decades have been marked by a growing trend toward the re-evaluation of the role and importance of informal housing in developing countries. The process has not been continuous, and it would be incorrect to suggest that a consensus has emerged. However, there is an emerging recognition that:

- the forced removal of "squatters" is not a solution to the housing problems of developing countries;
- formal housing programmes have failed to deliver housing at the rate and scale required. Further, they have frequently proved to be unaffordable for the poor.

Against this background, there is a growing international move toward mixed and pragmatic housing policies which mobilise diverse housing delivery processes and a wide spectrum of actors. The adoption of such policies is spurred by the growing realisation that:

- informal housing processes - such as site-and-service and "in-situ" upgrading - will have to be harnessed together with formal processes if housing crises are to be solved;
- no single sector has the resources to adequately address backlogs and burgeoning demand;
- rehabilitation of existing housing stock will have to accompany the construction of new housing. In the case of informal housing, this has led to growing support for "in-situ" upgrading.

At the level of practical implementation there are still many lessons to be learned. Early experiments with managed informal housing have not been universally successful and numerous problems have to be resolved. However, with the hindsight of experience, a diversity of supportive initiatives have begun to emerge in a number of developing countries. These are innovative and constructive responses representing a growing maturity in the development of informal housing delivery processes.

In South Africa, discussion around the role and potential of informal housing has yet to gain form and momentum. The Urban Foundation is fully aware of the complexity of the issue and of the diversity of perspectives that underpin current thinking. However, several key realities should now inform further debate:

- Informal housing is a major component of the residential fabric of South African towns and cities. Viewpoints envisaging the rehousing of all or most of these people will have to come to terms with the scale and the fiscal consequences of the programme that is implied.
- It is incorrect to see people in informal housing as a uniform and separate sub-group of the urban population.
- Organisation and interaction in and around informal settlements is inhibited by the insecurity and vulnerability of many communities. Conflict is frequently a result of these factors and the highly competitive, often politicised struggle to secure scarce resources.

TOWARD PURPOSEFUL POLICY DEBATE

What does the international experience mean for South Africa? At one level it illustrates the striking convergence of housing policies among countries that share

with South Africa a large informally-housed population, and an initial reluctance to incorporate informal housing into broader housing policy. It also provides insight into the factors determining success and failure among housing initiatives of various kinds. However, it would be a mistake to seek policy and programme **blueprints** internationally, for the following reasons:

- The legacy of apartheid adds a unique dimension to the South African context.
- Support for a housing policy with informal housing as a key component cannot be taken for granted. Informal housing has come to symbolise **exclusion** for many South Africans, and **disorder and anarchy** for others. If it is to gain broad support, a new policy will have to be widely discussed and debated, and **not unilaterally imposed**.

Hence, there is need for a unique policy process in South Africa, informed by events elsewhere, but negotiated locally among all the actors whose interests are at stake.

Informal Housing : Part Two outlines an approach to the negotiation of a new consensus around housing in general, and informal housing in particular. The two **Informal Housing** documents have been designed to inform this process in particular ways:

- **Informal Housing : Part One**, the present document, is both a foundation and a point of departure. It provides an empirical "map" of the extent and nature of contemporary informal

housing in South Africa, and explores the general informal housing experiences of developing countries around the world. Such a map is necessary because informal housing in South Africa has been widely ignored and misunderstood.

- **Informal Housing : Part Two**, to follow, suggests "signposts" for further policy debate. It has three major parts, namely:
 - An analysis and critique of **current approaches to informal housing in South Africa**, with particular emphasis on government policy
 - **Considerations for a new approach to informal housing** within the framework of national housing policy.
 - Proposals for the **way forward**, a suggested process for policy negotiation.

Constructive policy debate in South Africa has never been more important. The level of conflict surrounding the "squatter" issue adds urgency, but it also has the effect of focusing attention on the **symptoms** of the housing crisis rather than on its **roots**. This is not to deny the imperative of resolving the conflict. However, no **long lasting solution is possible until all South Africans are assured of access to safe, secure and affordable housing in an environment that supports viable and permanent communities**¹. The means to this end is the pivotal policy issue.

Section Endnotes

1. The Urban Foundation has proposed a "national housing goal" which elaborates the principles captured here. The goal is to **"ensure a sustainable housing process in South Africa which enables all people to secure housing within a safe and healthy environment and within viable communities"**. A **safe and healthy environment** is one which (at the minimum) provides potable water, a sewage disposal system, solid waste disposal, road access for emergency vehicles and protection from fire hazards. **Viable communities** are those which are fully integrated into the urban economies of South Africa. Hence location of housing developments must take into account access to transportation networks, job opportunities and the economic and social services which are concentrated in the urban areas. Viability also requires that the usual commercial and social facilities associated with residential environments (at the neighbourhood level) are available and that provision is made for the ongoing management of the environment. See the **Housing for All** document, p. 15.

APPENDIX A: THE URBAN FOUNDATION INFORMAL SETTLEMENT RESEARCH PROGRAMME

The contents of this document are based on an extensive programme of research - the core of which was conducted over a 3 year period - and a history of direct involvement in the field of informal settlement by the Urban Foundation.

The major component of research activity in this field is a monitoring and research programme which was conducted by the Centre for Policy Studies for the Urban Foundation. This project encompassed two phases:

The first, the 'pilot phase', focused on the PWV and undertook research over a period of six months from - October 1987 to March 1988 - into relevant published and other documentary material, the patterns in supply and identification of land for urban settlement, and the extent, patterns and social dynamics of informal residence. Social surveys, aerial photographic surveys and interviews with key central and local government officials were conducted in this phase.

The second phase of the project combined a comprehensive monitoring exercise with in-depth quantitative research and was conducted between March 1989 and March 1990. In this phase the geographic spread of the project was extended to include all metropolitan areas and selected other urbanising areas. In-depth research was concentrated on the PWV. The project entailed the following:

- an update on figures, distribution and extent of informal settlement on the PWV;
- a survey of attitudes of 3 071 households in selected communities living in close proximity to informal settlement areas on the PWV;
- in-depth life histories and group discussions with residents of selected free-standing settlement communities on the PWV;
- interviews with state officials with regard to policy imperatives, attitudes and experiences in managing informal settlement;
- interviews with selected private sector actors with regard to attitudes towards involvement in initiatives related to informal settlement;
- a refined, quantitative survey/study of informal settlement in all its forms on the PWV;
- national monitor reports of developments in Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Port Elizabeth, East London, Cape Town, Bloemfontein-Botshabelo, Witbank/Middleburg, Bushbuckridge/Mapumaleng, Kroonstad and the Bophuthatswana components of the PWV, including the causes and forms of informal settlement, the socio-political dynamics surrounding informal housing and the attitudes and activities of authorities and other actors in the field of informal settlement.

In addition to this extensive study, which has produced the most comprehensive overview of all aspects of informal settlement dynamics and of the attitudes and responses to this

phenomenon in South Africa, the Urban Foundation has been engaged in ongoing research, lobbying and monitoring activity in this field. In 1988 the Urban Foundation conducted a major campaign around a research-based response to the then Prevention of Illegal Squatting Amendment Bill. Legal research and analysis of the use of provisions in this and other informal housing related legislation, of regulations governing informal settlements and of appropriate legislative and administrative frameworks for this form of housing has been conducted on an ongoing basis.

Research has further been generated in the areas of:

- the international and early South African experience of land invasions;
- international case studies of responses to informal settlement including site-and-service schemes and in-situ upgrading projects.

In addition an ongoing monitor has been conducted of the dynamics of informal settlement across South Africa, as well as a monitor of attitudes and responses of all levels of government to this phenomenon.

APPENDIX B: PSC COMMISSIONED RESEARCH

UF/CPS REPORT SERIES

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Report 1.A : Byerley, M., 1990: The East London Metropolitan Area, in *Informal Settlement National Monitoring Document*, Centre for Policy Studies and Urban Foundation, Johannesburg.

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Report 1.D : Byerley, M., 1990: The Cape Town Metropolitan Area, in *Informal Settlement National Monitoring Document*, Centre for Policy Studies and Urban Foundation, Johannesburg.

Report 1.E : Byerley, M., 1990: The Durban Functional Region, in *Informal Settlement National Monitoring Document*, Centre for Policy Studies and Urban Foundation, Johannesburg.

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Report 4 : Sapire, H., 1990: *Report on the Social and Political Ecology of Free-Standing Settlements on the PWV*, Centre for Policy Studies (Research Report No. 16) and Urban Foundation, Johannesburg.

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POLICIES FOR A NEW URBAN FUTURE



INFORMAL HOUSING: PART ONE – THE CURRENT SITUATION

The enclosed document is the latest in Private Sector Council/Urban Foundation "Policies for a New Urban Future" series, and the first of two documents focussing on the important issue of informal housing.

Informal Housing: Part One is based on extensive local and international research, and seeks to provide an empirical "map" of the nature and extent of contemporary informal housing in South Africa, together with a review of informal housing experience in developing countries around the world.

Part Two, to follow early next year, will seek to identify "signposts" for further policy debate, and will propose a process for open and wide-ranging discussion and negotiation.

We hope you will find the document interesting and useful.

Other titles in the **Policies for a New Urban Future** series published to date include:

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- Rural Development: Towards a new Framework
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- Housing for All: Proposals for a National Urban Housing Policy

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